



*The*  
**COUNTRIES**  
*of the*  
**WORLD**





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# COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD:

BEING

A POPULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS CONTINENTS, ISLANDS, RIVERS,  
SEAS, AND PEOPLES OF THE GLOBE.

BY

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*Author of "The Peoples of the World," etc. etc.*

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\* \* \*  
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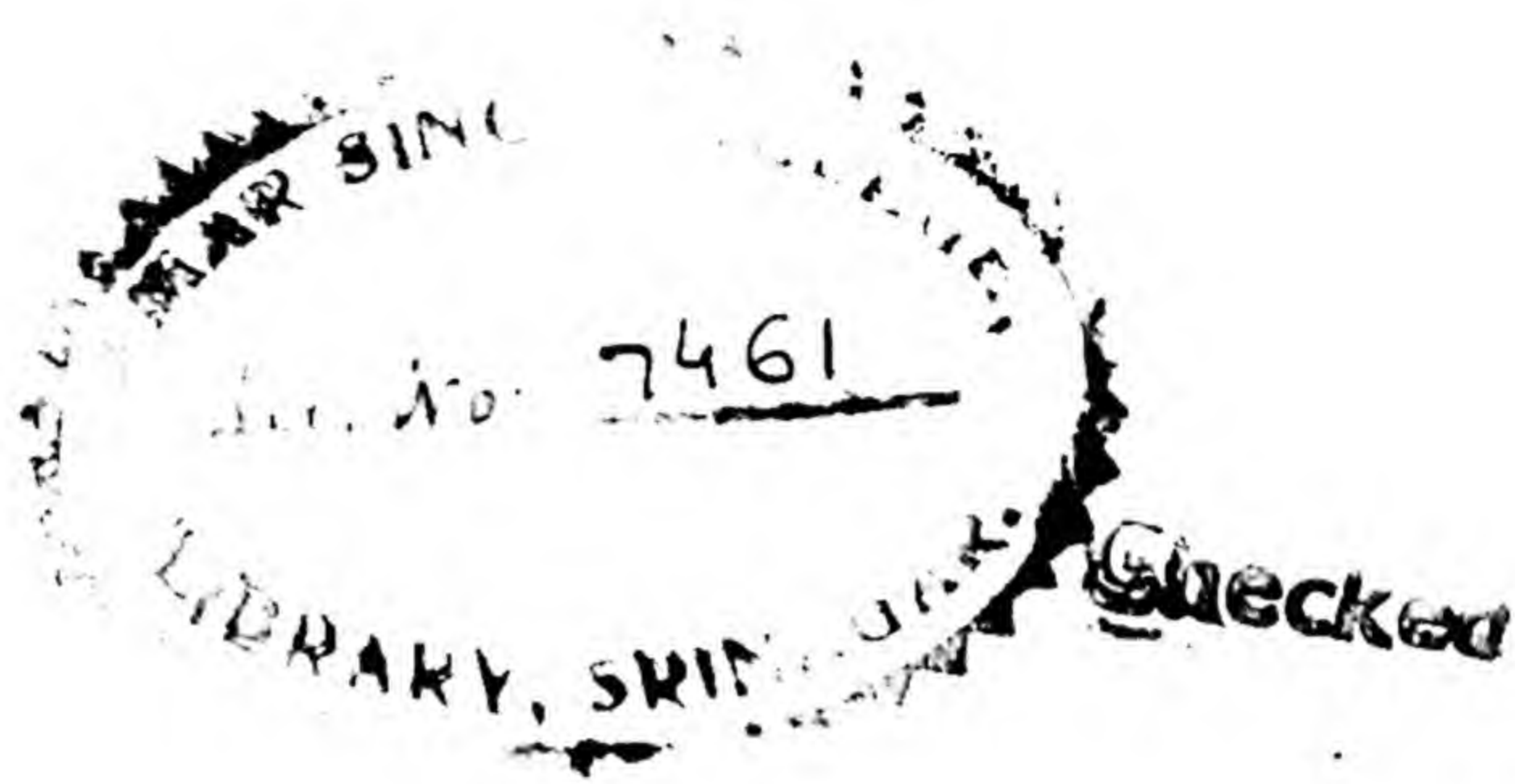
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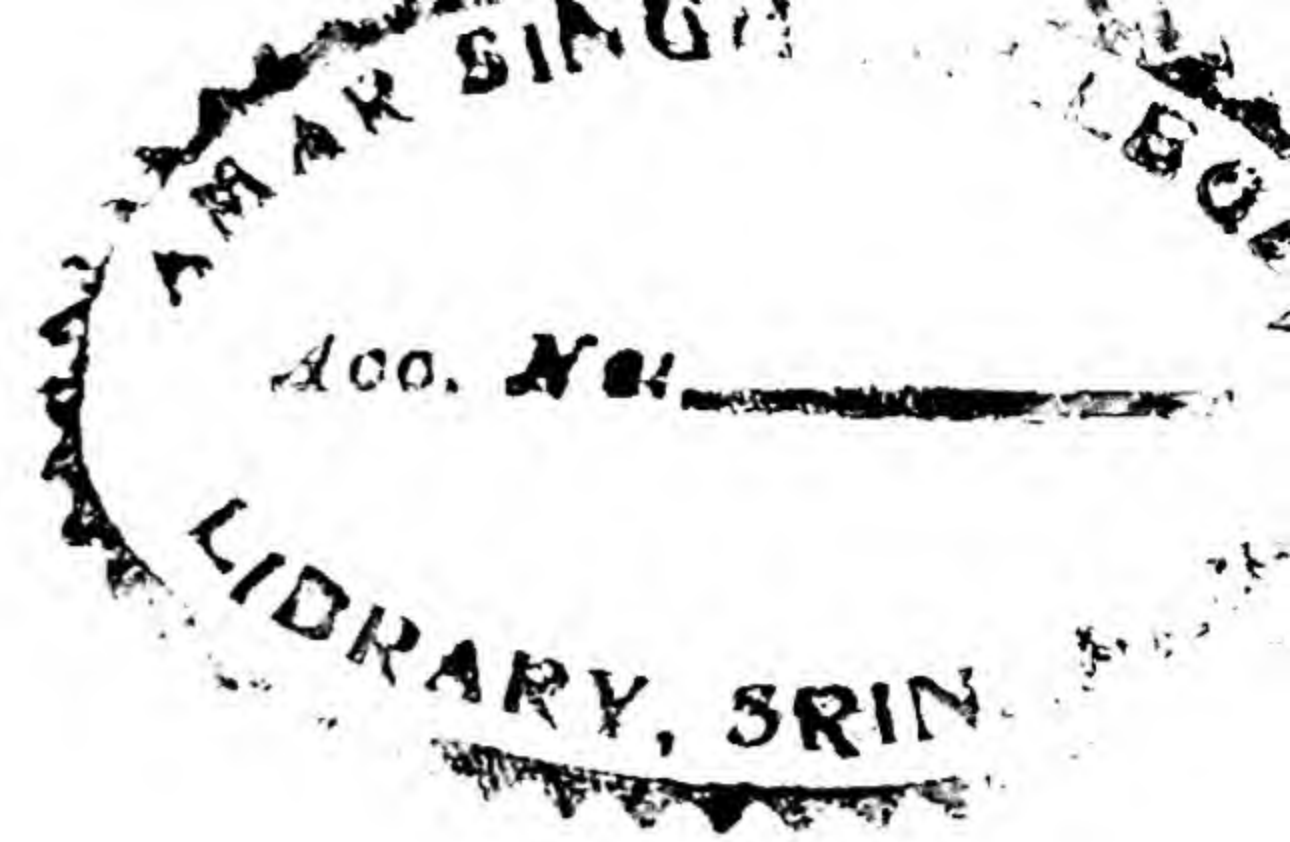
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# THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.

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## CHAPTER I.

SIBERIA: KANTCHATKA; AMOORLAND AND SIBERIA PROPER.



FROM America to Asia is geographically but a step. Behring Strait is, indeed, at its narrowest point, only thirty-six miles wide. Here Prince of Wales Cape—on the snows of which Eugène Sue, in his most famous work, places his “juif errant”—faces East Cape on the Asiatic shore, and as the Strait is at no place more than thirty fathoms in depth, it is more than probable that in some of the changes which the volcanic region has undergone, this connection between the Arctic Ocean and the Pacific has been opened within comparatively recent geological periods. The Diomede, and other islands in it, which now play to the tribes on each side the part of the Roman “terminus”—a commercial neutral ground—may be the last fragments of this vanished isthmus. Haze and fog often overhang the sea hereabouts, but owing to the shoalness of its waters icebergs are rare. The walrus is found on its northern shores, and in the southern parts, as well as on the Aleutian islands, there is carried on a great trade in killing the sea otter (Vol. I., p. 305) and the fur seals, which, in spite of the war of extermination which until recently was waged against them, are still numerous on these lonely volcanic-shaken isles. Some of them, particularly Behring’s Island, when first discovered, were inhabited by a species of sea-cow, the *Rhytina Stelleri*, on which Behring and his companions fed, but the visits of hungry seamen soon exterminated it, and even a fragment of its skeleton is now rare in museums. The whole group seems at one time to have been inhabited by Eskimo, and, indeed, the Aleuts are only members of the same widespread family.\* The Eskimo, however, do not extend on the Asiatic shore further than Tuski Land; and it may be noted that the point of contact between the essentially American Eskimo and Asia is just where the long winter’s ice would allow them to cross in their dog-sledges.

But the country we have now entered is a widely different one from the land we have

\* Dall: “On the Remains of Prehistoric Man in Caves of the Catherina Archipelago and the Aleutian Islands” (“Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge,” 1878); Nordenskjöld: “Voyage of the *Vega*” (1881).



left. Its northern regions are not so barren as the Arctic boundaries of America, and its southern plains and forests are not so luxuriant. It is a lone land nearly one million square miles larger than Europe, but is not, contrary to the common belief, desolate throughout, being in the more southern parts extremely rich and fruitful. It is thinly peopled, either by wandering heathen tribes herding reindeer, or gaining a precarious livelihood by hunting, or by Russian settlers, the majority of whom passed the Oural mountains from no wish of their own. Siberia, in a word, is, as all the world knows, the Russian penal colony, and though there are on the high roads of travel busy, populous, and even fine cities—just as there were in Australia when that continent was our place of banishment—everything in Siberia is tempered by the prevailing convict element. The “unfortunates” are everywhere, but as these exiles have in many cases been the foremost men in Russian public life, the material for progress in the great trans-Oural territory is great. Stretching from Cape Chelyuskin or Severo, the most northern point of Asia—the *Promontorium Tabin* of Pliny—it stretches south for nearly 2,000 miles, and from east to west for 3,600 miles. For political purposes the country is divided into the two great divisions of Western and Eastern Siberia, among which are distributed the Governments of Tobolsk, which contains over one and a quarter million of inhabitants, Tomsk, Yeniseisk, Yakutsk, Irkutsk, Transbaikalia, the Amoor Province, and the Littoral Province, which includes Kamtchatka and the shores of Behring Strait. Kamtchatka and the Amoor are, however, naturally separable from the rest of Siberia. Accordingly, it will be more convenient for our purpose to say a few words about each of them before sketching in fuller detail the great plains lying to the west.

#### KAMTCHATKA.

This peninsula,\* perhaps the dreariest part of the Russian empire, was not discovered by the Siberian conquerors until the close of the seventeenth century; but in 1697 the work of subjection began, and by 1711 the docile inhabitants, who were only a few savages living under petty chiefs, had submitted to their new masters, who, however, have never been able to gain much glory or revenue from the new territory. The tribute is paid in sable and other furs, and the coast affords few good harbours. The settlements of the “Littoral Province” are still in a very embryonic condition, and likely to continue so. Yet the first sight of Kamtchatka is, to the voyager in whose mind it is associated with “the wolf’s long howl from Onalaska’s shore,” not unpleasing. He expects ice, glaciers, and the bare lichened rocks of the country in the same latitude on the other side of America. Instead, his eye lights upon hills, covered with trees and verdant thickets, upon valleys white with clover and diversified with little groves of silver-barked birch, and even on rocks gay with wild roses and columbines, as he enters the harbour of Petropaulovski (p. 4), whose red-roofed and bark-thatched log-houses, and green-domed church, contrast pleasingly with the high hills, which “sweep in a great semicircle of foliage” round the quiet pond-like inlet of Avatcha Bay on which the village is placed. Petropaulovski, one of the most isolated of all the spots dedicated to the honour

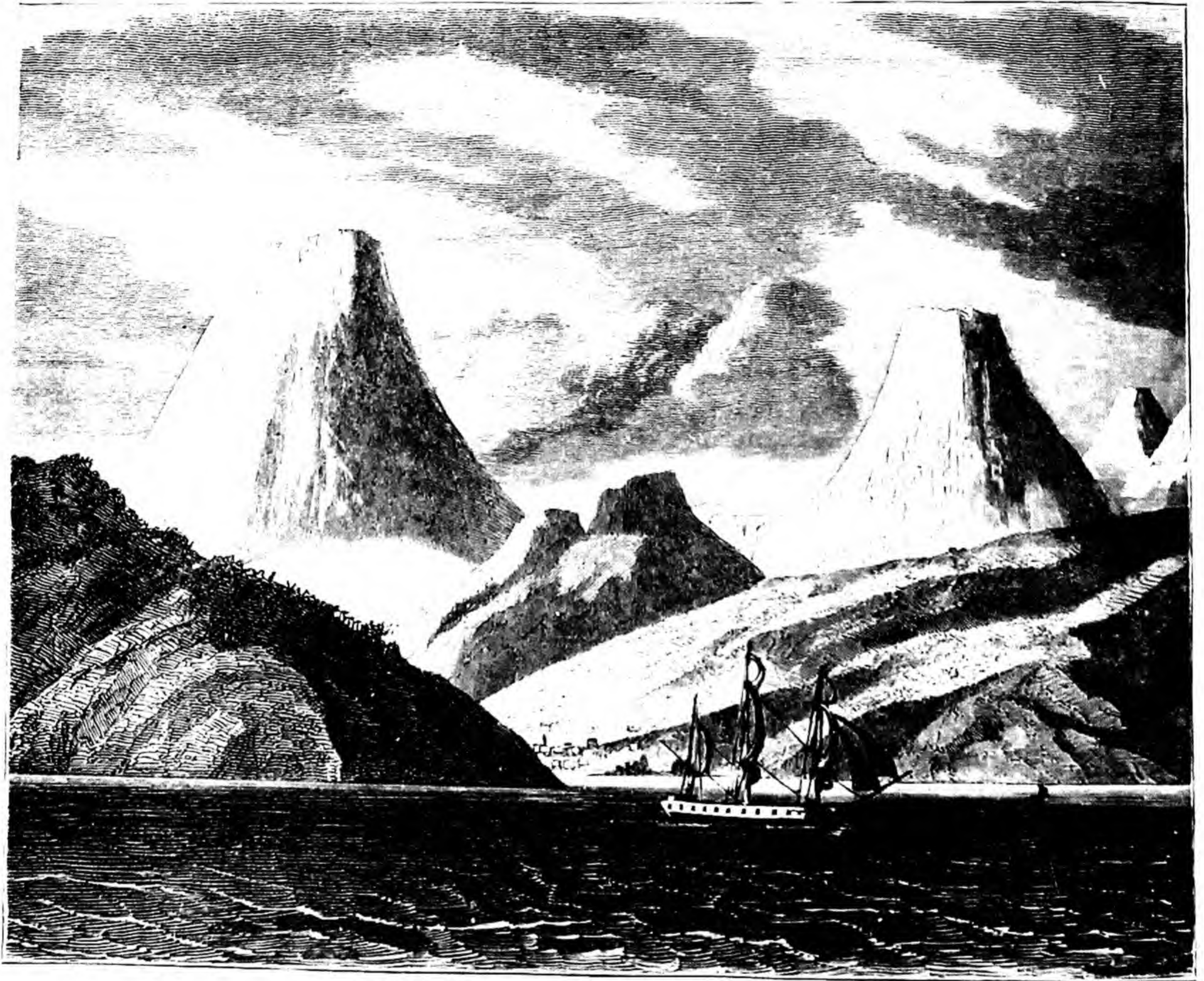
\* The word “Kamtchatka” is derived from “Kontchatj,” to terminate.



of Peter and Paul, has few "lions" for the sight-seeing tourist. The two rude monuments to the memory of the famous navigators, Behring and La Perouse, are the visible signs of the better side of the Kamtchatkan village. The grass-grown fortifications, built during the Crimean War to repel the ill-advised and unsuccessful attack of the allied French and English squadrons, and the densely-peopled graveyard not far off, present the history of Petropaulovski in its less pleasing forms. The roar of the allies' cannon was, perhaps, the first intimation that the inhabitants—native Cossacks and peasants—ever had of Turkey and the "Eastern Question." But to this day it is customary, on the anniversary of the battle, for all the inhabitants to march in solemn procession "round the town and over the hill from which the storming party was thrown, chanting hymns of joy and praise for the victory." The extreme length of the Peninsula of Kamtchatka is about 700 miles, and it is divided longitudinally by an almost continuous range of rugged mountains, containing many extinct volcanoes, in addition to five or six in a state of nearly continuous activity. To the north of this range is high level steppe or "dole," a dreary desert, the chosen home of the wandering "reindeer Koriaks." The central and southern parts of the peninsula are, according to Mr. Kennan, broken up by the spurs and foot-hills of the great mountain range into deep sequestered valleys of the wildest and most picturesque character, and afford scenery which, for majestic and varied beauty, is not surpassed in all Northern Asia. The climate, except in the north, is comparatively mild and equable, and the vegetation is luxuriant beyond anything which our pre-conceived ideas of the country would ascribe to it. The population of the Littoral Province the Russian statist put down (in 1887) at 74,000, and of this number Kamtchatka may be credited with 5,800. Of these the Kamtchatkadals are the most numerous. They are settled in little log villages, chiefly near the mouth of the small rivers which rise in the central range and fall into the sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific, and are engaged in fishing, fur trapping, and the cultivation of rye, turnips, cabbages, and potatoes, which grow fairly well as far north as 58°. In the fertile valleys of the Kamtchatka river there are many such settlements, where, an American visitor affirms, the farmers, in spite of their isolation, enjoy as much material comfort as do the occupants of many of the rough, unkempt outposts of civilisation in the United States. The Russians are, for the most part, traders among the Kamtchatkadals, and some of them are freed exiles, or Cossacks of the rudest type. The latter also form the garrisons. The wandering Koriaks are a wild race who shun civilisation and rarely come farther south than latitude 58°, and then only for the purpose of trade. They wander about from place to place, depending for subsistence on their large herds of reindeer, and living in fur tents pitched in spots suitable for pasturing their domestic animals. The Russians are prudent enough not to attempt governing these independent folks too much. But the rest of the Kamtchatkadals are nominally ruled by an "Ispravnik," or district governor, who is at once the judge and the collector of the annual "yassak," or tax of furs, which is levied on every male inhabitant in the province. But as in Kamtchatka, pack-horses, canoes, and dog sledges are the only means of getting about in a country where a road is unknown, his Excellency the Ispravnik is rarely seen outside Petropaulovski, where he has his head-quarters. Tagil is another



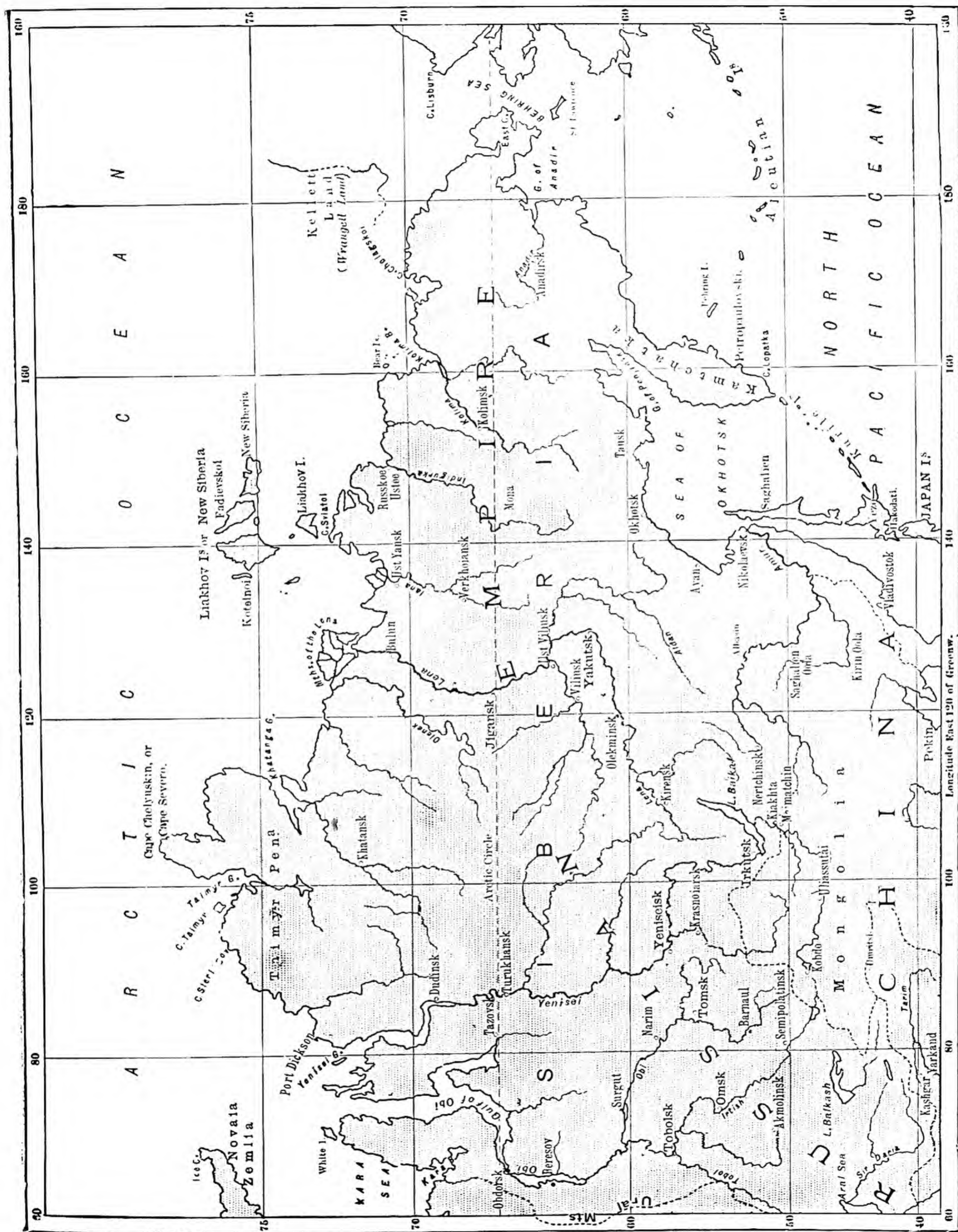
“fortress,” and Nijni-Kamchatka, in the valley of the Kamchatka river, is the only other place of consequence. Altogether, in the peninsula, which varies in breadth from 30 to 120 miles, there may be about 237,000 square miles. The volcanoes, only one of which (Klinchev, 15,040 feet) is of great height, constitute the northern continuation of those traversing the Philippine and the Japanese Islands. On the east, where the mountains approach close to the shore, the cliffs are high and precipitous, but



ENTRANCE TO THE HARBOUR OF PETROPAULOVSKI.

as most of the inlets are blocked at their mouths with reefs, the harbours which naturally exist are for the present incapable of being utilised, and as the only river which cannot be employed as an inlet to the country debouches into a shallow bay exposed to the full force of the easterly winds, the opening up of Kamchatka is still in the far future. Nor is there much to develop. The few vegetables grown—when they are not destroyed by untimely frosts, heavy rains, or armies of mice and rats—are not more than sufficient for local consumption, and the same may be said in regard to the cattle and horses which are reared in the valley of the river just noted. Accordingly, unless mines are discovered, the peninsula is likely for ever to remain in its present condition of solitary desolation—a





MAP OF SIBERIA AND PART OF CHINA.



home for a few semi-savages of habits too disgusting to be recorded in all their minutiae, and for convicts harmless enough to be trusted so near the sea.\*

#### AMoorland.

The great rivers of Siberia flow into the Arctic Sea, but that which drains the Amoor country debouches into the Pacific: hence its importance. The Amoor, Amour, Amur, or Sakalin, formed by the union of several streams, is in all about 1,600 miles in length. Naturally, therefore, the climate of the country through which it flows varies. In the upper part of its course the summers are short and the winters cold; further south it passes through a region which enjoys almost tropical heat. Here oaks, limes, and elms flourish in great forests, instead of the stunted larch and firs on its upper waters. On the lower Amoor the climate is again that of typical Siberia. The river is frozen up half the year, and the general surroundings are also those of the Island of Saghalin†, which is opposite to its mouth (Vol. IV., p. 316). Amoorland was first known to the Russians in 1639, and soon after then Cossack irregulars began conflicts with the Chinese, who controlled and partially occupied the country. These skirmishes were not always on the side of the invaders, but in the end a treaty was concluded, the effect of which was to transfer a considerable portion of the region from the Chinese to the Russians. This was in 1689, and up to 1847 there were not many alterations of the state of matters thus brought about. But in 1847 the Russians began to make preparations for further conquests in the Amoor Valley, which preparations ended as they have usually done when the Asiatic pot and the Russian pan came into collision; for in 1860 the whole Amoor Valley, as we now know it, fell into the hands of the Czar, and has continued as part of his dominions. Though the advantages to be gained by the possession of this country have not been fulfilled to the extravagant extent it was at one time believed they would eventuate in, it cannot be denied that the Amoor drains a country for the most part very fine, and that ultimately it may form for millions a home quite as attractive as most parts of Canada. Though the Amoor proper is only 1,600 miles long, its tributaries are many of them very large rivers, and altogether, taking its largest feeders as the continuation of the river, it is over 2,860 miles long, and 2,200 of these are navigable by steamer. Altogether, it drains an area of 766,000 square miles, comprising much fertile and well-wooded country. The "Amoor Province" proper embraces an area of 174,000 square miles, while part of the Littoral Province, under which is also included Kamtchatka, is embraced in this country. The total population of the former province was, in 1887, 41,000, the greater portion of them Tungoose barbarians (p. 8) and con-

\* Kamtchatka never changes much. Accordingly, the chief literature on it, though old, is yet quite seasonable. The works of Krasheninnikov have been translated into English, and those of Cochrane, Cottrell, Dobell, Habersham, Tronson, Collins, Kittlitz, Steller, and Erman, in addition to the more recent narratives of Kennan and Bush, almost exhaust the original sources of information on this part of Eastern Siberia, unless we accept the numerous official—political, geographical, and scientific—reports presented to the St. Petersburg authorities from time to time; but these are, for the most part, in the Russian language.

† Also spelled "Sakalin," and "Saghalien." The native name is said to be "Krafto," or "Taraki," under the latter of which designations the Russians are now beginning to describe it.



victs. There are numerous steamboats on the river, and a considerable trade is carried on. But the channel is narrow and intricate, and even, according to Captain Bax, with a vessel drawing only eight feet and a half of water, the greatest care is necessary to keep it from grounding. It, however, abounds with salmon and other fish, and may, under a better system, contribute more extensively than it does at present to the wealth of the world.\* Mr. Ronald Bridgett, who, a few years ago, made a voyage up the river, describes the ice on it as breaking up in April, and moving away down stream with great uproar at the rate of about twenty miles a day. By the middle of October it again begins to freeze, and when sufficiently firm a sledge track follows the course of the stream, post stations being established at intervals of fifteen to thirty miles, and provided with the customary Government order, the traveller can ordinarily obtain post-horses, though on the lower part of the river he has to content himself with a Giliak sledge and a team of dogs. The winter post from Nikolaievsk to St. Petersburg across Siberia usually occupies fifty to fifty-five days, but there is a case on record in which a Government courier, travelling uninterruptedly, made the journey in thirty days. During the summer months steamers ascend from Nikolaievsk, in the Pacific, to Stretensk, on the Shilka tributary, in the Government of Transbaikalia, in about the same period, though the descent is made in half that time, the steamer anchoring during the night.

Nikolaievsk (p. 9), the capital of the Government, is, when first seen by the voyager entering from the Gulf of Tartary, a rather striking place. The houses are not numerous, but their green and red shingle roofs, contrasted with sombre forests, give a gay aspect to the town. The buildings are usually of one storey, and built of wood, with double windows to exclude the cold, which, during the seven months' winter, is intense. There is a public library and reading-room, and a club where balls and concerts of the amateur musical talent of the place are held; but the wide streets, bordered by a wooden plankway, are very deserted-looking, and the garden where the band performs in the summer evenings, is an enclosure where weeds and a few seats have taken the place of the forest which everywhere else dominates, except where it has been hewn to supply the place with fuel and timber. The church is—as in all Russian towns—a prominent object; but the dreary cemetery, among the rugged stump-dotted ground in the outskirts of the town, is among the most desolate of the cities of the dead. The river is at this spot about a mile in width, and on the opposite shore is bounded by lofty pine-clothed cliffs. Villages dot the river banks at intervals, and rolling wooded hills arise from the water's edges for the first few miles, though here and there the stream widens out and divides into a number of channels. The Russian peasants at these villages grow grain for their own maintenance, and feed a few bullocks on the meadow hay. They have firewood, fowls, milk, eggs, wild strawberries and raspberries, potatoes, cucumbers, &c., for sale, but appear far from prosperous, and not much more comfortable in their *ménage* than their neighbours, the Giliaks and Goldi, who live by fishing and hunting. The

\* Collins: "Exploration of the Amoor River" (1858); Ravenstein: "Russians on the Amoor" (1861); Schrenck: "Reisen und Forschungen im Amurland" (1858-67); Atkinson: "Travels in the Region of the Amoor" (1868); lists of works in Chavanne, Karpf and Le Monnier: "Die Literatur über *Amur*" (1876), relating to the neighbouring country.





mosquitoes, which darken the air, make life by no means a summer dream, and the bush fires, which often envelop the country in smoke during the warm weather, render any settlement in the back country precarious. After leaving the river's mouth, everything in the form of a road ceases: the river is hereafter the only highway. Khabarofka, 614 miles from Nikolaievsk, where there is a garrison, is destined to become a place of some importance, for here the River Usuri, which flows from Mantchuria in the south, joins the Amoor. For some days after leaving this town the river banks are flat and uninteresting, and the current divided into a number of channels by several low islands. At Ekaterin-Nikolski, a Cossack village, the passage of the Hinghan mountains begin. The stream then becomes very rapid, and narrows to about a quarter of a mile in width. The scenery also changes entirely. Instead of flat, monotonous, wooded shores, hills 1,000 to

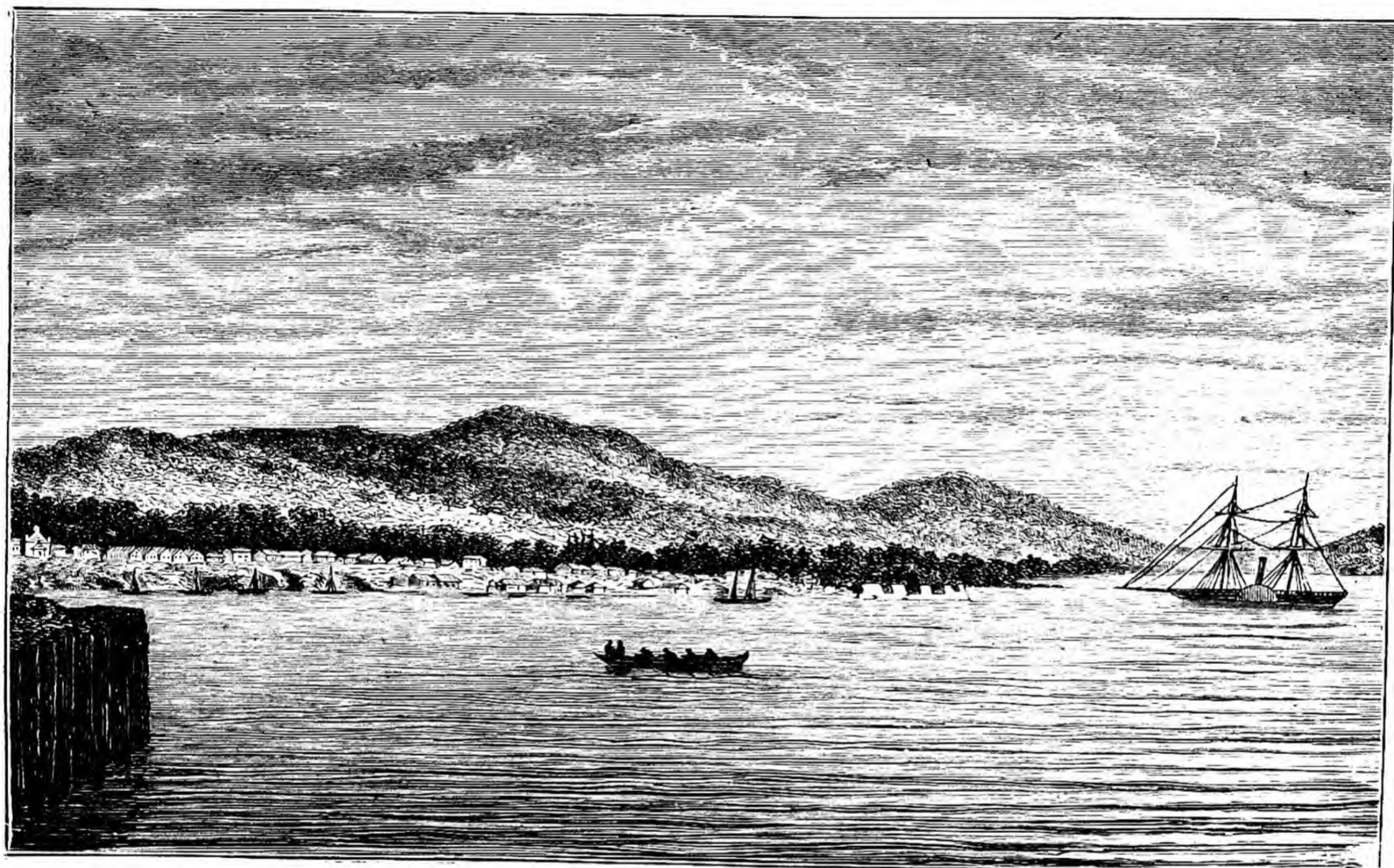


TUNGOOSE ENCAMPMENT.

1,500 feet in height rise precipitously from the water's edge, on either side. Birch, fir, and mountain oak cover them, while at intervals the steamer passes the outlets of valleys, which add to the beauty of the scene. For fifty miles this is the characteristic of the stream. Then there is a change after the Hinghan mountains are passed. The country opens out in swelling woodland interspersed with park-like patches of grass, so that the banks on either side look not unlike the English downs. Russian villages multiply, and considerable quantities of grain are cultivated in the now more genial climate of the south. Mantchu villages appear on the Chinese shore, while a few gaily painted junks belonging to the navy begin to strike the eye at the spot where the river forms the boundary between the Russian and Chinese territory; and at fifteen miles above Aigun, at the junction of the River Dsaya with the Amoor, is Blagovestchensk, the residence of the Governor of Amoorland. It is, next to Nikolaievsk, the principal town on the river, and consists of two streets running parallel to the river banks, the houses rather



wide apart and built of logs. There is a public garden and esplanade, and here is quartered a considerable garrison. The country around is without a tree, but many cattle are grazed in the vicinity, and though the summer is short, the heat is sufficiently great to allow of melons ripening in the open air. Opposite the town is the village of Saghalin, where reside the Mantchu traders, the Russian authorities not allowing them to remain at night on the Russian side of the river. They bring for sale flour, cattle, tobacco, &c., in return for European goods, silver roubles, and Mexican dollars, which latter are sent south to Tsitsibar, and melted into what the English merchants in China call "*shoes*" of silver, or "*sycee*." Along the Dsaya, which here joins the Amoor, are numerous settlements of



VIEW OF NIKOLAIIEVSK, THE CAPITAL OF AMOORLAND.

Russians, who have left their country on account of persecutions for conscience' sake.\* They cultivate great crops of grain, which the Government readily purchases, in order to supply the less favoured colonies on the Amoor, which, on their first foundation, were forced to rely for their stores on sea-borne cargoes from the Baltic, or on what reached them from Transbaikalia. Low hills covered with fern, stunted oak, and birch beeches, are the characteristic of the banks for many miles. Above Blagovestchensk, and for 200 miles up, the chalk cliffs of the White Mountains are the most remarkable features in a very pleasing country. Immense flocks of wild fowl frequent these parts of the river,

\* Among these are some of the strictest sectaries of the "Starovertsi," or Old Believers, who have also taken refuge in the wildest parts of Siberia. (Morgan, in Prejevalsky's "From Kulja Across the Tian Shan to Lob-Nor" (1879), p. 202; and Wallace's "Russia," Vol. I., p. 14.)



and sturgeon are caught in such numbers as to render the preparation of caviare an important industry. Game is also abundant and boldly pursued: villagers will even attack the bear single-handed on foot. Among the fur animals are fine sables, trapped by the Aronchonee, a wild tribe who wander about this part of the country. Albazin is a village of some importance. Gold is found in the vicinity, but the crowds who flocked thither in the summer of 1867 were disappointed in the hope of wealth. Higher up the stream narrows to the breadth of the Thames at London, but in places it is very shallow. For 120 miles it passes through the Little Hinghan Mountains, among lofty hills covered with dense pine forests, and high limestone cliffs here and there rising up from the water's edge. In general character, it reminded Mr. Bridgett of the Danube between Passau and Linz, but instead of ruined castles on the heights, there are only a few solitary post-houses. Rafts floating cattle down stream, and immigrants on their way to the lower river country, after a journey often of twelve to eighteen months from Southern Russia and the Caspian, are among the most familiar objects that break the monotony of an up-river voyage in this section of the Amoor. In the province of Transbaikalia, which is entered after passing the village of Gorbitza, the mountains recede from the river, and the country assumes a more settled aspect. The habitations are no longer confined to the banks of the river, and the country, which is diversified with pine and white birch-patched hills, shows considerable cultivation. The frosts begin early, and in October the crops are often in the fields and even uncut. But the peasants consider this no hardship, as the first fall of snow enables them to carry the sheaves to the barn on sledges, and thus saves what they consider much labour. Steamers can proceed to Chetah, but Stretensk is considered the head of navigation, for here the overland carriage road to Russia commences. A few log-houses, barracks for soldiers, and a convict establishment, with the inevitable domed church, make up the town, and two miles further up stream is the port with dry docks, workshops, and all other needful appliances for repairing the steamers and barges navigating the river. The few European articles in use find their way to this isolated town, partly after a long water carriage up the river from the sea-board, and partly by the still more costly land journey across Siberia. The result is that everything not the produce of the country is dear. At the date of Mr. Bridgett's visit, loaf sugar was selling at an equivalent of 3s. per lb., English bottled porter at 1s. 6d. per quart, and other articles in proportion. It may be added, that the Cossack, having proved but an indifferent colonist, the Government is doing its best to introduce German emigrants into the Amoor Valley.

#### SIBERIA PROPER.

The continent of Asia is usually described as consisting of certain plateaux and lowlands. The plateaux are the eastern one, comprising the table-land of Tibet and the Desert of Gobi, and the western plateau, or table-land of Iran, divided up into lesser areas by various mountain ranges. The six great lowland areas are the Bucharian lowland, a wild sterile waste between the Caspian Sea and Lake Aral; the Syrian and Arabian lowland, the lowlands of Hindostan, the Indo-Chinese lowlands, through which the Irawaddy



flows, Cambodia and Siam, the Chinese lowlands, and finally Siberia, the lowland of the north, and the greatest of them all. Indeed, the country may be described as one immense plain, bounded on the south by mountains, but gradually getting lower and lower as it approaches the north, until along the shore of the Frozen Ocean it is one dreary flat, little raised above the level of the sea. Even there, however, as noted in the recent voyage of Baron Nordenskjöld, there is a difference. West of the Lena the forest keeps a considerable distance from the shore; but to the east of that promontory it approaches in the form of stunted pines almost to the water's edge. It is also evident that the country is, like most of the circumpolar region, rising, for lagoons, only separated by a few yards of land from the sea, are common all along that coast, and recent marine shells are found on the "tûndras," or mossy barrens along the coast, while on the Liakov or Siberian Islands, according to the recent explorations of Dr. Bunge and Baron Toll, there are hills apparently formed of petrified logs, this wood and the accompanying strata of coal being of Tertiary age. The tusks of the mammoth, which are so extensively scattered over Northern Siberia, are also found here. This mammoth was a wool-covered dwarf elephant, which there is every reason to believe lived in the northern part of Siberia, when the climate was very much the same as it is now, and whose form has in a more or less complete shape been preserved to this day in the ice or frozen soil. The region to the west of the Yenisei presents one monotonous level, unbroken by hills of any sort, covered in its north-western parts by forests, though for the greater extent this province is steppe or upland plain. Much of it consists of dry sand, salt marsh, and bogs; but the Barabinskara Steppe, between the Rivers Irtysh and Obi, has large birch groves, and is well suited for agriculture; while the soil of the Abakan Steppes, which lie along the River Abakan, a tributary of the Yenisei, is so rich that it requires no manure. But even where the soil is unsuited for crops its fine pastures afford abundance of food to the countless herds of reindeer and cattle possessed by the natives. Eastern Siberia is more diversified, for in this part of the country the plains are intersected by offshoots of the Altai, Sagan, and Stanovoi range of mountains. Much of it is suited for agriculture, and the south is covered for the greater portion of its extent with magnificent forests. Vineyards are common. The fruit is excellent, and wine of a fair quality is made, though as yet it has not found a market out of the country. The northern part, extending to the Arctic Ocean, is for the most part a dreary moss-covered "tûndra" on which, however, can be pastured, at certain seasons of the year, herds of reindeer, though the swarms of mosquitoes which, during the warm weather, infest this and every other portion of Siberia, render life almost intolerable to man; and the *æstrus*, or "bot," which attacks the deer, combined with the disease which has broken out among them, is rapidly reducing the Samoyedes, Ostiaks, Voguls, and other tribes which depend on them, from affluence to poverty.

Siberia was in early times under Tartar princes, but about 1580 it was subdued by the emissaries of the Czar, and has ever since been looked upon, not so much as an integral part of the Russian empire as a convict settlement, or a region to which colonists could be attracted only by offering special inducements. It has an offensive smack of the hulks about it still, even though there are many free settlers in the country, and, indeed, the



peasants in the region east of the Ural look upon Siberia as the perfect land of promise. Formerly a proprietor was empowered by law to despatch to Siberia any unruly serfs on his estate, and could transport them thither without a trial.\* It is, moreover, shut off either from the markets of the south by the long land journey and the exclusiveness of China, and by the equally extensive region which separates it from Europe; while the great rivers which flow through it, and afford water-ways in every direction, debouch into the Arctic



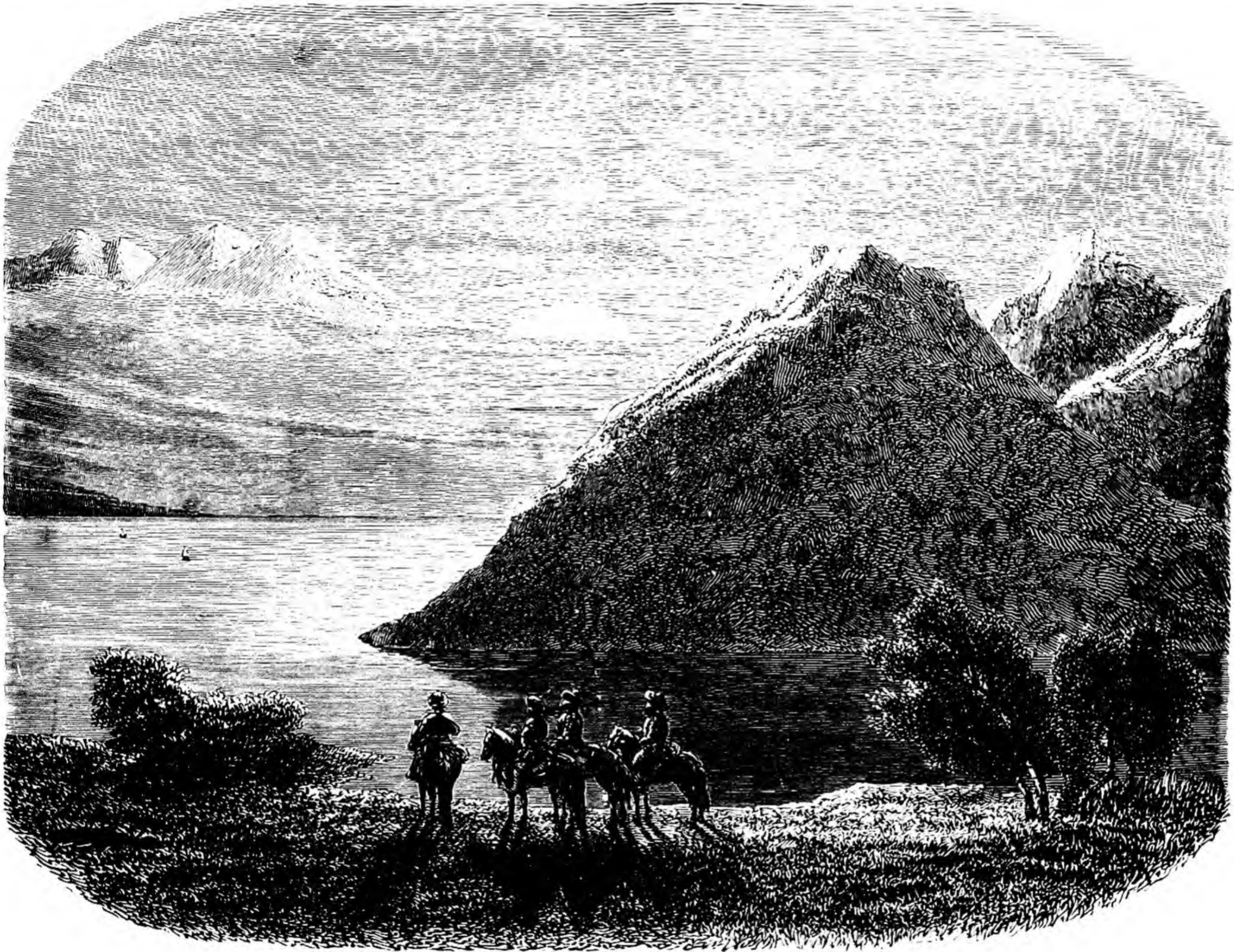
SIBERIAN DOG SLEDGE.

Seas. Therefore, unless the water-way which the enterprise of Wiggins and Nordenskjöld has opened up be found practicable, Siberia, until a railway links it to Russia proper, will remain a country much larger than Europe, and yet with only about four and a tenth million people—savage and civilised, bond and free—within its whole boundaries. Hence, with the exception of its mines, its trade is unimportant, and its manufactures few and languishing. Spirits and leather are, however, produced to a considerable extent. Soap-boiling, tallow-melting, and the making of stearine candles employ a good deal of capital; while cotton and wool are woven into coarse fabrics in some of the cities, which, like Irkutsk,

\* Wallace's "Russia," Vol. I., p. 375.



Tobolsk, Tjumen, Omsk (p. 20), and Tomsk have from 17,000 to 27,000 inhabitants. The fisheries on the great rivers afford occupation for many of the native Siberians; and at the fairs which are periodically held business is done with the most remote parts of Europe and Asia. Kiakhtha is the meeting place for the Chinese and Siberian traders, and here is a school for teaching young merchants the Chinese language. The mines are, however, the great sources of wealth for Siberia at present. At one time all of them were Government



VIEW ON LAKE BAÏKAL, SIBERIA.

monopolies, and worked for Government alone, but of late most of them have been thrown open to private individuals, the Crown simply exacting a royalty, and claiming particular gems as its perquisites. The result is that the Government not only makes more than it did in former times when it worked the mines on public account, but by abandoning its monopoly has stimulated those directly dependent on their working to greater energy than was evinced by public officials sure of their salaries, whether the soil was searched after the most antique or most approved method, or whether it yielded little or much. Large sums are often made by mere peasants in the gold mines of the Ourals, and particularly in the sands of the River Nertcha and its tributaries in Eastern Siberia;



indeed, some of the greatest Russian fortunes have been accumulated from this source. Silver, lead, platinum, copper (especially the form known as malachite), iron, coal, tin, cinnabar (the ore of quicksilver), zinc, bismuth, arsenic, sulphur, alum, sal ammoniac, nitre, natron, and naphtha are also found in greater or less abundance in some parts of Siberia. Among precious stones the topaz, hyacinth, Siberian emerald, beryl, onyx, red and green jasper, chrysolite, red garnet, lapis lazuli, bakalite, and opals exist in greater or less abundance in different parts of this region.

In the Murinsk district emeralds of extraordinary brilliancy are often picked up, as well as other precious stones, in which this district is particularly rich. The aqua marina is in like manner one of the prizes of the Nertchinsk district, famous for its copper mines, the lapis lazuli of the Kultuk Valley, and zircon of the vicinity of Lake Ilmenskoi. Cinnabar is also abundant, particularly in the vicinity of Nertchinsk, where the ore is worked by the worst class of criminals, and if gold and quartz mines are ever developed in the country, as undoubtedly they will be in time, the quicksilver will prove of great value in their working. Most of the gems are cut and polished in the country. The Russian peasant is not an inventor, but he has a genius for imitating. He has only to be told to go and do so and so, and in time it will be done. He will in this manner become a blacksmith, a wood carver, a copyist of painters, an engineer, or a lapidary, provided that he is only given time enough. He will watch the next workman to him using his saw, chisel, or file; then he will cautiously imitate him, doing a little at a time, and nothing rashly. Next day he will show more skill, until in a few weeks he becomes a sufficiently skilful workman to be entrusted with tasks requiring great judgment and even knowledge to execute. In the Granilöi Fabrik, in Ekaterinburg, for example, the visitor is astonished to find men not above the rank of peasant, and in all likelihood convicts under surveillance, executing the most beautiful engravings on beryl, amethysts, topaz, and emeralds, or carving on jasper and porphyry vases with a skill which could not be exceeded, if equalled, in the great centres of fine art workmen in Europe. Yet such intelligent labourers are—or were, at all events, in Erman's day, sixty years ago—not paid more than 3s. 8d. per month, with rations of a few pounds of black bread. But they are quite content with their lot, and toil on to make fortunes for the rich mine-owners, who live in great state in fine mansions. Even the master workmen or overseers are only paid some £11 or £12 per annum, but they, like the ordinary labourers, have their perquisites, in the unrecognised pilferings which they can manage to effect among the treasures they handle. Indeed, if we are to credit the gossip of the Siberian towns, only a moiety of the gems discovered find their way into the hands of their legitimate owners; and though Government officials are not allowed to own mines, it is reported that they are not the most stoical of those who find amethysts and topaz lying about unnoticed too great temptations for ordinary virtue. The buying and selling of precious stones form a business which all classes dabble in. The visitors to a Siberian town are, soon after their arrival, waited on either with stones cut and uncut, by the recognised or by the irregular agents of the numerous lapidaries or dealers. The very children dog the new arrivals at every step with rare bargains wrapped up in bits of rag, either on their own account or as the least suspected means of entrapping the unwary traveller into purchasing at



what seems a low price stones worth next to nothing, or which may have been made by the skilful artificer of artificial gems in Paris or Vienna, and exported to Siberia. The stones are also set in the gold and silver obtained from the vicinity, though usually with less taste than is displayed in the cutting of the gems. The iron mines of Siberia have been worked for almost two centuries, and at Neviansk the best iron is manufactured into articles of domestic utility, which find their way into every part of the country; among other uses the iron is applied to the manufacture of the coarse but efficient rifles owned by the poorer classes of Siberians. At Tagilsk copper ore is worked and smelted; and in the school of design founded by one of the wealthy family of Demidoffs, the iron made out of the magnetic ore in the vicinity is finely lacquered and damascened by the pupils. Malachite vases, tables, and doors are also made here, the masses of the metal found often weighing several thousand pounds. Platinum was at one time cast into coins, but this use for it has been abandoned, and in all about 4,000 lbs. are now mined annually, though the "mining" in reality consists in picking up the grains in which the metal is usually found. The fine "sable iron," so-called from being stamped with the figure of that animal, is still produced at Tchernostotchinsk in the Ourals, and is so good that its fame has even reached Birmingham and Sheffield. Shot, shell, cutlery, and swords, and a hundred other articles, are also produced in the country, and would add still more to its wealth, did not the cost of transporting them to Europe impose an almost prohibitory tax on their competing in the markets of the world with goods which have not had to travel so far. The native nitre is utilised in making gunpowder.

The making of paper, glass, linen, cloth, carriages, carpets of goats' hair, swan-down coverlets, and other manufactures, are carried on in different places, though in no case have they attained great proportions. Mica is used in place of window glass; and on the Oka is found plumbago, said to equal that of the now almost exhausted Cumberland mines.\* On the great rivers are built a vast number of boats, and other vessels suitable for their navigation; and on Lake Baikal (p. 13) there is an Admiralty dockyard, and at Vladivostok—"the Dominion of the East"—a naval arsenal, which is rapidly assuming great proportions, has been established. The corn brandy trade is under Government supervision, but is almost entirely in the hands of the Jews. According to law, none of the natives are allowed to obtain it, but in reality, as happens under similar circumstances in America, they only cease to get drunk when they can find no more furs to purchase the liquor. The same decree is in force in Kamtchatka, but there the natives manage to produce a more deleterious intoxication with a poisonous fungus, the "muck-a-moor," or *Amanita muscaria*. It is in large doses a narcotic poison, but in small quantities produces all the effects of alcohol. The authorities prohibit, as far as they can, the natives using it, but so eager are the Koriaks for it, that, as it does not grow in their country, they will readily give valuable furs in exchange for it. They are, however, economical in its use, and can reproduce the intoxication caused in one individual by one fungus in a manner so peculiar and repulsive, that it is better not to enlarge on the point of Kamtchatkadale convivial economy. The fur trade is another great staple of Siberia, but is pursued often with great hardships to the natives toiling under their task-

\* Eden: "Frozen Asia" (1879), pp. 244—249; gold-fields are now worked in the Upper Amoor.



masters, and as the hunting of wild animals prevents their settling down to civilised pursuits, its effect on the country cannot be said to be in any way good.

But Siberia is, in the minds of the world at large, associated with something more familiar than either furs or precious stones. As the writer has remarked in another place,\* for a century and a half no tidings have come from the North more familiar than the news that so many people have been "sent to Siberia." Since the days of Peter the Great it has been the doom of tens of thousands—gentle and simple, high and low, criminals the vilest, patriots the loftiest, dreamers the most imprudent. In 1874, nearly 15,000 wended their way thither, and in 1879, the number of "unfortunates" was even greater. The word conveys to the mind of Southern Europe all that is most repulsive in penal banishment. Instinctively the mind of the newspaper reader who catches the word recalls the "Exiles of Siberia." He pictures to himself long dreary troops (p. 17) of "unfortunates" trudging through the snow, or perishing of hunger and cold and misery long before they reach the mines of the Oural, or the jasper quarries of Ekaterinburg. He hears the clanking of the chains, the moan of the exiles, and the crack of the Bashkir Tartar's whip, as he drives along the victims of the "Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery," to lead a desolate existence and die a felon's death amid the desolation of Siberia. Even in Russia there is a dread of the name which is not altogether inspired by its penal terrors, with which the refractory subjects of the Czar are only too familiar. But, in reality, our ideas of Siberia are, like the majority of popular impressions transmitted by tradition, altogether beside the truth. With the winter's snows we should contrast the flower-covered plains of summer, the luxuriant corn-fields and purple vineyards of autumn in Southern Siberia. Mines there are, and very rich ones too, but there are also noble cities, splendid residences, and society as polished as any in Europe. Siberia, indeed, is a general place for emptying the gaols of Russia, and men are banished to Siberia who would, in other parts of Europe, merely suffer a few years' imprisonment. And of late years the traditional horrors of exile over the Ourals have greatly altered for the better, though doubtless the worst class of criminals are not treated with any great leniency. The great numbers sent at different times have leavened the whole of society in Siberia. Indeed, if we take into account them and their descendants, as well as the convicts whose sentences have expired, and who have remained in the country, they form the most numerous portion of the population. No traveller can have journeyed along the post route leading from Nijni-Novgorod, over the Ourals, across Siberia by way of Tjumen, Tobolsk, Tomsk, or Yeniseisk, without meeting long strings of exiles, some of whom have been on the road six, eight, or ten months, and sometimes, as in the case of those destined for the settlements in the Amoor Valley, Saghalin, and Kamtchatka, even two years, though, since the year 1879, the exiles for the maritime parts of Eastern Siberia have been despatched by sea. The worst are chained, but, except in the vicinity of the towns through which they may pass, great leniency is usually shown to the "unfortunates," as with kindly tolerance the exiles are styled by the country people. The women and children—especially when they are the families of the convicts, permitted to accompany them—are usually conveyed in wagons, or, farther north, in reindeer or

\* "Cassell's Family Magazine," 1879, p. 434.



dog sledges; while political prisoners of rank, when once they are clear of the large cities, may be seen consorting with the officers of the guard, and even sharing their meals in the block-houses along the route. Sometimes in passing through a fanatical village the actual sharers in a conspiracy will be spat upon, and even stoned, by the loyally ignorant peasants; but more frequently the simple-minded people will bring them presents of food



PRISONERS ON THE ROAD TO SIBERIA.

and other necessities, and ask heaven to forgive and shelter them. At each station on the road there are barracks for the accommodation of the prisoners. These barracks are usually outside the villages, and are surrounded by high stockades of pointed trunks of trees, over which it is impossible to climb, though the precaution is always taken of having the exiles well guarded by mounted Cossacks. The daily march is not toilsome, and varies according to the nature of the road or the accommodation for man and beast: it is usually about fourteen or fifteen miles. Nevertheless, on the long journeys many die by the way—indeed, I have heard it affirmed by Russians well acquainted with the



system, that not over four-fifths of those sent to the far North or to Eastern Siberia ever reach their destination.

As soon as they arrive in Siberia the convicts are divided into three classes. First come those condemned for the foulest crimes known to the Russian law, such as would in England be awarded death,\* or penal servitude for life, or for a long term of years. These culprits are doomed to work in the mines, and usually have a hard lot. Such exiles are called in Siberia *Katorshniki*, a term no doubt derived from *κάτερον*, the name given to a galley by the Byzantine historians, as well as by the Greeks on the Black Sea at the present day. Next come the *Loslanuyje na roboto*, or exiles condemned for shorter periods, and for minor offences. Vagrants at large, rogues worthy of a more severe punishment than imprisonment, prisoners sentenced by the communal courts, and, in former days, serfs condemned, as refractory labourers, by the Government, on application by the proprietors of estates on which they lived, as well as minor political offenders, who are well out of harm's way, comprise the bulk of these "unfortunates." The place they are sent to is proportioned to their turpitude, the worst offenders being dispatched farthest from the boundaries of Russia in Europe, for instance, to the shores of the Arctic Sea,† and the Eastern provinces, while the lighter culprits are permitted to settle down in Western Siberia, immediately to the east of the Ourals. This class of convicts are usually condemned only for short terms, and are designed for colonists on the expiration of their term of forced labour. Even before that date they are often employed in the Government service, more like ordinary labourers than as legal slaves. The third and highest class of exiles are the *Loslanuyje na poselenye*, who are condemned for mild crimes. In fact, they are considered to have expiated their offences by the time they arrive in the country, and are at once established as proper colonists, sometimes in villages already existing, at another time in new ones laid out for them.

Siberian society, constituted to a great extent of such elements as these described, is very genial, and frequently refined, but not moral. Many of the convicts are political offenders, some of the highest education and nobility of character; but a vast number who have gained a certain amount of freedom, or, whose sentences being expired, have settled down in the country, are of quite another class. Actual criminals have no place left them for repentance; they are always under the gaol ban. But offenders of the higher class, and especially political exiles, are rarely scowled on. Russian society is the most tolerant in the world, and since political exiles have increased, the front of their offending has ceased to be visible. They are after a year or two received into the best company, and in every way obtain the treatment their rank and education would have entitled them to at home. It is only the worst offenders who are not allowed to be accompanied by their wives and families; and as many of them are people of rank, the balls, clubs, and card-parties of Tobolsk or Tomsk are very different from what similar social gatherings recruited from the *détenus* of Port Arthur would have been. In Tasmania (Vol. IV., p. 117) we have seen how little room the "lag" had left for repentance. In Siberia—unless he be an actual criminal in the strict sense of the term—he is not considered to

\* Capital punishment has ceased in Russia, except for the crime of high treason.

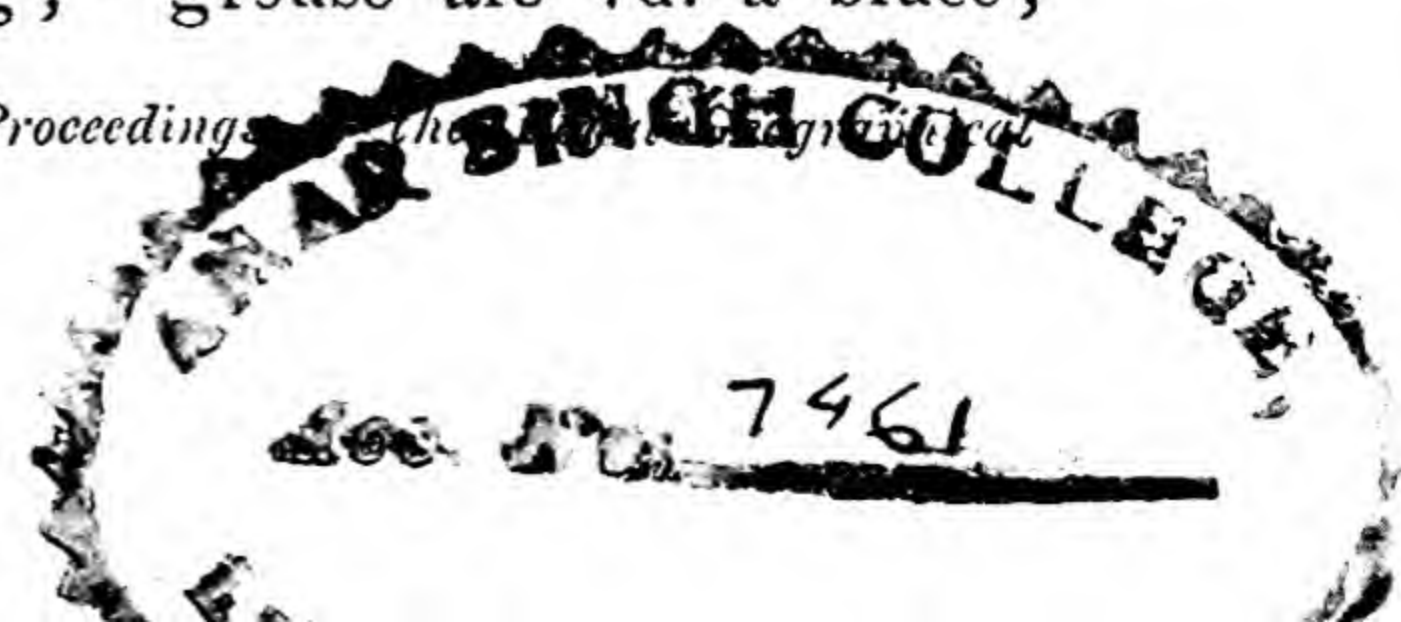
† There is also a penal settlement in the Department of Archangel, in Europe.



have done anything to merit even remorse. Of course, there is in the country a large amount of the worst criminal element. All the Siberian unfortunates have not been Nihilists or political offenders. Hence the gaol taint attaches to many villages, and even to the large cities. But with such people the traveller does not come much in contact, and the severe police regulations secure him against any serious annoyance from their attentions. Civil and military officials are the principal people, and among them life seems one continual round of pleasure, especially in South Siberia, where the summer and autumn climate is excellent, though, as elsewhere throughout the country, the winter cold is severe, but dry and healthy. To those who have lived in the country in any other capacity than that of convicts, the name which to Europe is redolent of all unsavoury memories recalls only sweet reminiscences. The families of officials will often, even in St. Petersburg and Moscow, talk longingly of the pleasant days of "Sibir," and the "good society" of, say Irkutsk, is as refined as that of any European city of the same size. "The interior of the houses," writes M. Wahl, "is more comfortable, Parisian fashions more brilliantly represented, and the champagne sparkles there in greater profusion and better quality than in many a fashionable saloon of the most important European cities. While in Europe people think twice before they start on a visit of a few miles' distance, a ball in Siberia sometimes brings together people from distances of eighty to one hundred and more miles across rivers, hills, precipices, and over roads and bridges, which would terrify a European brought up in the luxuries of a refined civilisation." The Russian Government have offered special inducements for opening up Siberia to settlement, but at the same time have not, until recently, shown much inclination to lessen its isolation from the rest of the world. The peculiar nature of the population would naturally account for this hesitation at making escape from it any easier than it is. And the causes which conduce to the remoteness of Siberia from the world at large is the fact that though it is permeated from south to north by great rivers which form water-ways throughout the entire country, it has no good seaports, for the Yenisei, Obi, and Lena, with the smaller rivers, flow into the Arctic Ocean. The Obi is, indeed, the largest river of the Old World, being 3,000 miles long, and draining an area of about 1,300,000 square miles, a country only inferior in size to the Valleys of the Amazon and La Plata in South America. The Yenisei is not much smaller, running as it does from the confines of China over a course of 2,800 miles; while not to enumerate smaller drainers of half of Asia, the Lena flows for 2,500 miles, and drains an area of 800,000 square miles. All of these rivers are important water-ways into the country, and are the seat of plenteous fisheries, either at their mouths during the summer, or throughout their entire courses.

Of the Yenisei country Mr. Seeborn gives a most attractive account.\* He describes in graphic terms the roads covered with thousands of pack-horses carrying goods between one town and another; the immense rivers flowing through half a continent, but as yet not a quarter utilised—the highways for "country vessels" in the summer, and great sledge-roads when frozen over during the winter. In the valley of the Yenisei dried fish can be bought for "almost nothing;" grouse are 7d. a brace;

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XI.VIII. (1878), p. 6; *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII., p. 101; and "Siberia in Asia" (1882).





excellent beef, 2½d. a pound; and a little further south, at Krasnoiarsk, a ton of wheat can be bought for the same price we give for a hundredweight. So extremely cheap are corn and hay on the great steppes between Tomsk and Tjumen, that the hire of horses is only a halfpenny per horse per English mile. At Yeniseisk, a town in the midst of an immense forest, a ship's mast of hard larch, sixty feet long, three feet in diameter at the base, and eighteen inches at the apex, can be bought for a sovereign, and hundreds can be delivered in a week.

Captain Wiggins and Baron Nordenskjöld are hardly less enthusiastic, though as a



VIEW OF OMSK, SIBERIA.

field for commerce Captain Wiggins is understood to give the preference to the Obi. The latter distinguished explorer tells us that near the mouth of the Yenisei, though still far north of the Arctic circle, they were astonished at the luxuriance of the meadows overflowed by the summer floods. The fertility of the soil and the immeasurable extent and richness in grass of the pastures, drew forth from one of the walrus hunters who accompanied Dr. Nordenskjöld a cry of envy. This man was the owner of a little patch of ground among the fells in Northern Norway; but when he saw the meadows that no creature pastured, and no scythe mowed, he expressed a longing for the splendid land "our Lord had given the Russians." Daily and hourly "we heard the same cry repeated, and in even louder tones, when some weeks after we came to the grand old forest between Yeniseisk and Turukhansk, or to the nearly uninhabited plains on the other side of the



Krasnoiarsk, covered with deep *tcherno-sem* (black earth), equal without doubt in fertility to the best parts of Scania [Southern Sweden], and in extent surpassing the whole Scandinavian peninsula. This judgment, formed on the spot by a genuine though illiterate agriculturist, is not without interest in forming an idea of the future importance of Siberia.”\*

Since it has been proved that during the latter end of summer and the beginning of autumn the ice, during many seasons, is driven sufficiently off the coast by the force of the floods of their rivers to allow vessels to reach their mouths, the Russian Government have made some efforts to utilise the discoveries made by Nordenskjöld and Wiggins.



OSTIAK HUNTERS OF SIBERIA.

As the result of their explorations in 1875, it has been found that by the expenditure of a few thousands the Angora, a tributary of the Yenisei, the navigation of which is at present difficult, on account of the cataracts or rapids, might be made navigable to Lake Baikal (p. 13), and to connect the Obi with the Yenisei, and the Yenisei with the Lena. This territory is calculated by Von Baer to exceed that drained by the combined river tributaries of the Danube, Don, Dnieper, Dniester, Nile, Po, Ebro, Rhone, and all the rivers which flow into the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, and the Mediterranean. “Part of the territory in question,” Baron Nordenskjöld remarks, “no doubt lies to the north of the Arctic circle; but here, too, there are to be found the most extensive and the finest forests on the globe. South of the forest region proper level stone-free

\* “The Arctic Voyages of A. E. Nordenskjöld,” by Alex. Leslie (1879). pp. 209, 300.



plains, covered with the most fertile soil, stretch away for hundreds of leagues, which only wait for the plough of the cultivator to yield the most abundant harvests; and further south the Yenisei and its tributaries flow through regions where the grape ripens in the open air. As I write this I have before me a bunch of splendid Siberian grapes." The trade by this route is not yet fully organised; the charts are imperfect, and a class of vessels which can prudently undertake the voyage has not yet been provided. Hence the failure of the ill-found vessels, which, without proper ice-masters or instructions, have of late attempted to reach the Yenisei—almost none of them succeeding. But in previous years several vessels have gone thither and done a profitable trade. The Siberian merchants have even built five ships on the rivers, two of which reached England in 1878. Since then the business has been abandoned. An idea of the profitable character of the traffic which might be carried on may be gathered from the fact that Captain Wiggins on one of his voyages took out five tons of salt bought at 15s. per ton, and that he sold this for nearly £15 per ton. On the return voyage he ballasted his ship with fine black-lead. Wheat can be bought for 25s. a ton on the Yenisei, which in England would command £15 or £16 per ton. But until the trade of the rivers is properly organised, and warehouses for storing the cargo to be shipped are built at their mouths, the new sea route which may by-and-by revolutionise the trade of Siberia ought not to be judged too harshly, or allowed to raise over-sanguine expectations. Meantime, Baron Nordenskjöld, by his voyage, considers that he has established the practicability of the route even to the Lena. This belief is, however, not generally entertained. But the railway has now crossed the Ourals to Ekaterinburg, and it is proposed to extend it to the Pacific, thus rendering the journey across the Russian Empire capable of being made in fourteen days.

There is, doubtless, a great future for Siberia. The mighty rivers permeating the country on to the very confines of Mongolia will, when the new railway is thoroughly opened up, form great highways down which the wool, beef, timber, wheat, wine, and ores of Siberia, as well as the fossil ivory found on its shores, will find their way to Europe. Nor has the discipline of the penal settlements of the country which, after very exhaustive inquiries on the subject, I can affirm to be in modern times, as a rule, firm without harshness, been without good effect, for in no part of his dominions is the Czar more adored; and it is noted that the most turbulent characters often become, after a few years of "Sibir," docile citizens and industrious farmers.\* By-and-by a railway will penetrate the country, and with a cheaper mode of transit for its goods than sledges or pack-horses, Siberia will be properly appreciated in the world. Even at present it is a far richer country than Canada, and with a climate very much the same. In its isolation from the world it is not worse situated than were the Western United States before railways penetrated them, and the lakes utilised as a water-way to the coast; while its capabilities and varied products are very much greater, and its internal natural communications far superior to any part of North America, if we except the Mississippi Valley.

\* Erman: "Travels in Siberia" (1848); Atkinson: "Oriental and Western Siberia" (1858); Hill: "Travels in Siberia" (1854); Cottrell: "Recollections of Siberia" (1842); Middendorff: "Siberische Reise" (1860); Radde: "Reisen im Süden von Ost-Sibirien" (1863); Baron R[osen]: "Russian Conspirators in Siberia" (1872); the works of Finsch, De Long, Melville, Lansdell, Kropotkine, &c. &c.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE CHINESE EMPIRE: ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES.

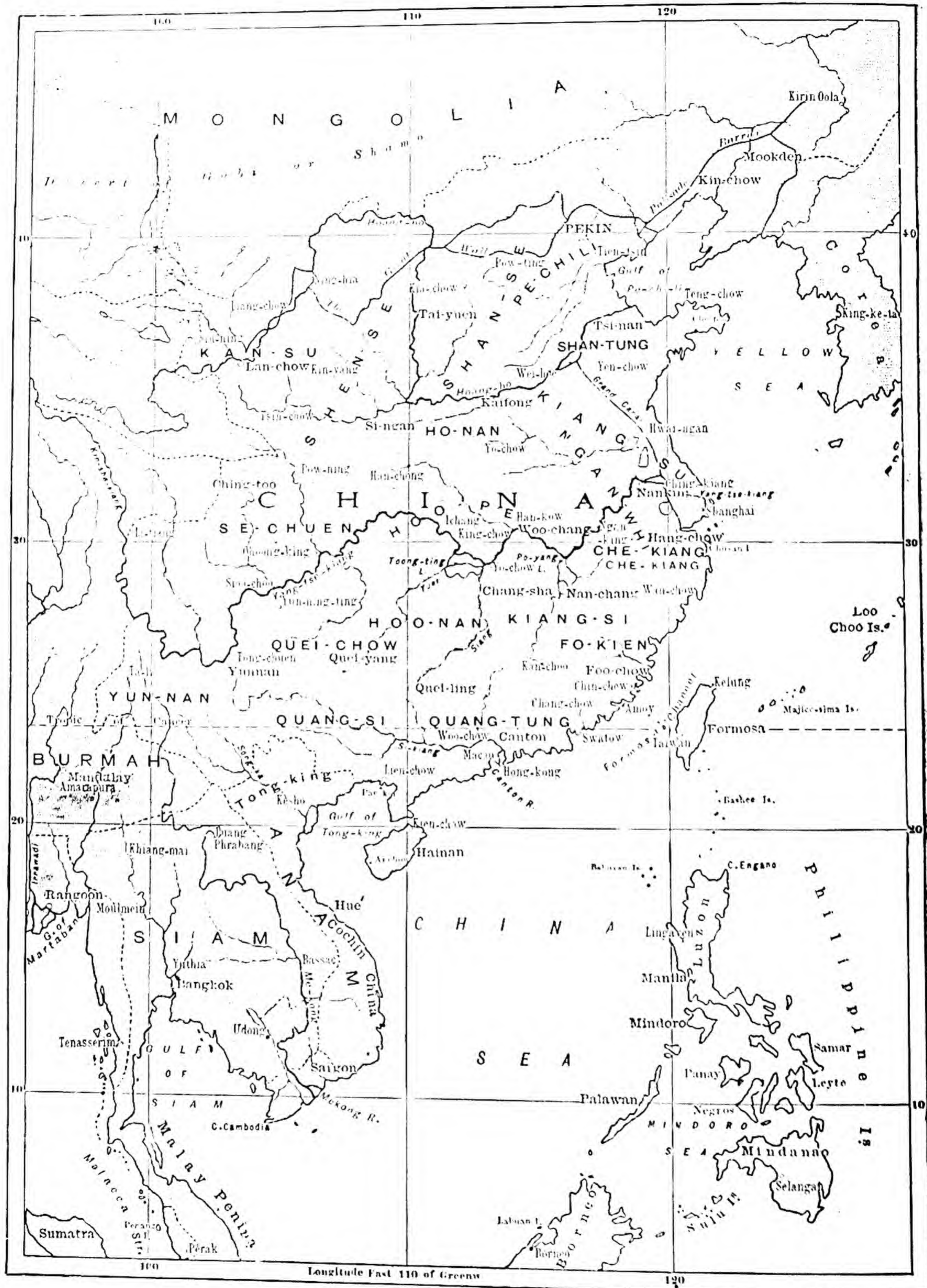
IN a former work\* a summary was given of the manners and institutions of the Chinese. In the sketch which follows we propose outlining the general geography of their country, and supplying some account of its natural resources and industries so far as these have not been already described in the account referred to. A country containing by the best estimates—and the best are only estimates—3,924,627 square miles,† possesses many climates and varied features. But in general terms it may be said that China is a great sloping basin “surrounded by lofty mountains on the north-west and south-west, with the sea on the south and south-east.” Within this area there is hilly and level country. There are mountains with peaks 19,000 feet above the level of the sea; but in the northern and midland provinces the snow rarely lies long or falls to a great extent, while in the south it is almost unknown. The physical features of the country are equally varied. In parts of it there are fine champaign tracts like France and Belgium, swampy districts like Holland, and mountainous regions like Switzerland. These various districts, embracing country from the hot low flats by the seashore to the high cool uplands of Mongolia, produce everything that can be desired for the sustenance, comfort, and luxury of man: hence the disinclination of the Chinese to have any dealings, more than they can help, with “the outer barbarian,” whose goods they do not require, though theirs are coveted by him. The country has mineral resources surpassing those of Europe and Australia, and not far short, if they were properly developed, of those of some of the Western States of America in some varieties of metals. The coal-fields of North China alone have been estimated to occupy an area of 83,000 square miles, which is nearly seven times that of those of Great Britain, and more than two-thirds that of the United States. Iron-stone and iron ore of various kinds are found in every province in such abundance that the Chinese seldom work any but the finest black magnetic. Copper, lead, tin, silver, and gold are so plentiful that scarcely a district of the empire is without them, while the water communications, either natural or artificial, are so well distributed that any portion of the empire can be reached cheaply, if not quickly, even without the railways, of which the Government up to 1887 opposed the building.‡ Nor are the people occupying this great region unworthy of the land which has for ages been indisputably theirs. As diplomatists, we have the authority of Sir Frederick Bruce for saying that they are equal to any in Europe; as we have more than once experienced, they can hold their own with the most expert statesmen; and, as recent events have proved, Russian art is, when matched against Mongol patience, of but little account. Their

\* “The Peoples of the World,” Vol. IV., pp. 170–239.

† Other estimates make the area as low as 1,300,000 square miles.

‡ Williamson: “Journeys in North China,” Vol. I., p. 3.

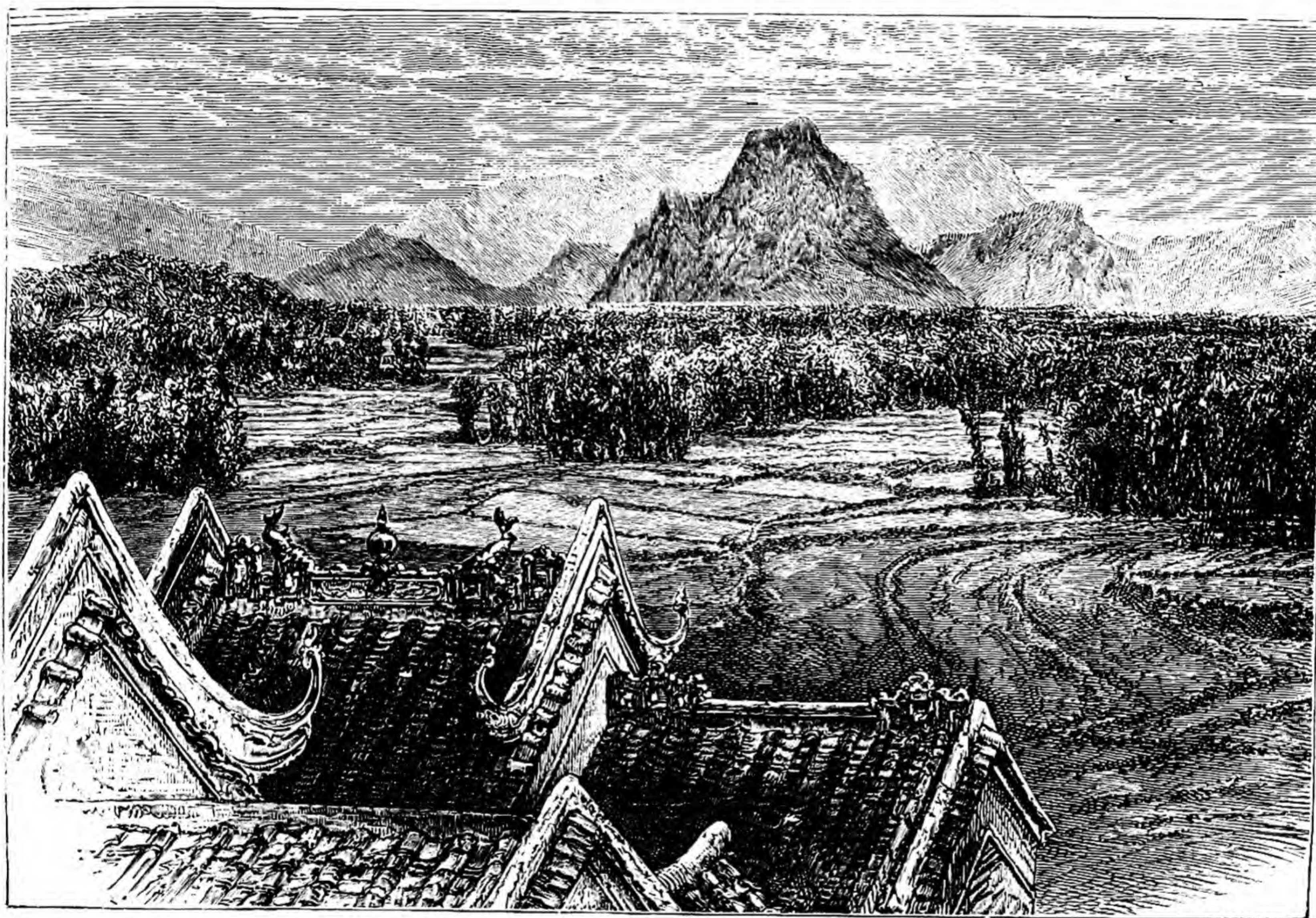




MAP OF CHINA AND SOME OF THE ADJOINING COUNTRIES.



merchants, in spite of the fact that their experience is limited to the nations visiting their ports or living in the vicinity of their country, are proverbially keen traders. From the first day Europe came in contact with them it found its match, and of late years, as their knowledge has extended, the Chinese merchants are coping successfully with our own in every department of trade, and, indeed, in many cases gaining ground on them. China is no longer the country in which fortunes can be made rapidly, and though they object to change their ancient habits at the bidding of the new comers, the literati are not insensible to the advantages of picking up such knowledge from us as they find it



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convenient to use, while the body of the people, as we shall presently see, are not much more prejudiced against foreign innovations than some nations nearer home. For centuries their system of competitive examinations has been pushed to an extreme which the most enthusiastic of the advocates of this plan for fixing the literary status of the candidates for public offices have never dreamed of introducing into Britain; and in the few instances in which their young men have sought education in the universities of Europe and America, they have been found, if not so eager to seize every novelty as the Japanese, not inferior in ability to the best students of Nippon. The mandarins are, like all bureaucrats, jealous of losing by the introduction of a new system what they have gained by an old one—conservative of their privileges, and bigoted to a degree



which has often brought evil on China. But the people at large are—it is the opinion of Mr. Williamson and all who have travelled much in the country—shrewd, painstaking, and indomitable. They are intelligent, docile, and orderly, and if not so polite as the Japanese, often what seems rudeness is dictated by invincible curiosity—in its way a species of intelligence—by a misunderstanding on the part of the visitors, or, at worst, by the malicious suggestions of the official aristocracy, few of whom can tolerate “the foreign devils.”

#### PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

The great delta plain of the north-east is the most noticeable feature in its topography. It varies in breadth from 150 to 500 miles, and extends for about 700 miles in a southerly direction. The greater portion of it is generally below the level of the Yellow River; hence the disastrous inundations which often accompany the rise of that river. It is, indeed, as much the delta of the Yellow River, and to some extent of the Yang-tse-Kiang, as Egypt is the daughter of the Nile; and owing to the great quantity of mud brought down by the Yellow River, and the absence of ocean currents, this delta is rapidly increasing, and the adjoining sea shoaling. As an instance, Mr. Douglas, from whom we have taken these facts, notes that the town of Pootai was one *le*—that is, about one-third of an English mile—west of the seashore in the year 220 B.C., and in 1730 it was 130 *le* inland, thus giving a yearly encroachment of about 100 feet. Again, Seen-shway-Kow, on the Pei-ho, was on the seashore in 500 A.D., and it is now about eighteen miles inland. This delta plain is remarkable for its annular form, and for the fact that it encloses within it the mountainous districts of the province of Shan-tung. We have mentioned the inundations which, directly or indirectly, have exerted such an influence on the social life and history of China. The rivers, of which there are many throughout the country, are in general confined within low banks, and though efforts are made by means of embankments and other artificial barricades to prevent both them and the canals overflowing, the industrious agriculturists are not always able to prevent disastrous floods and inundations. The two greatest rivers in the country are the Yang-tse-Kiang, and the Hoang-Ho, or Yellow River. The first mentioned is well known to commerce, but the second has attained an evil reputation, on account of the great inundations of the low country which it has caused. In the neighbourhood of the city of Kai-fung-Foo it enters the great Eastern plain of China, and so often has it changed its course between this district and the sea, that the Chinese know it by the expressive name of the “Sorrow of Han.” In 2,000 years it has altered its course nine times, flowing into the sea by as many different beds. In 1851, 1852, and 1853, it overflowed its banks, submerging a country twelve miles wide, and forcing its waters into the narrow channel of the Ta-tsing River, with the result that it is rapidly eating away the banks of its new course, in time to precipitate a still greater catastrophe than that which it was the cause of nearly forty years ago. The Yang-tse-Kiang flows for 2,900 miles from the mountains of Tibet, and drains a basin of 548,000 square miles. It is navigable for steamers 1,200 miles from its mouth, but



beyond this distance it ceases to become navigable for any but light native craft, the rapids which occur in the deep mountain gorges between Kwai-chow and I-chang effectually barring the way. The Grand Canal—one of the many canals in China—was constructed as early as the seventh century, and as in all parts of its course there is a perceptible current, it is usually classed among the rivers of the Celestial Empire. Commencing at the town of Hang-chow, it traverses 700 miles of country, until it unites with the Pei-ho, near the town of Lin-tchin Chow. It varies in breadth, but is connected with so many offshoots and branches that it plays a most important share in the commerce and agriculture of the country through which it runs. Its banks are lined with cities, towns, and villages, and owing to its richness of soil, and the easy means of communication which the Canal affords, the plain of the Grand Canal is one of the most thickly populated in all the country. Since the Taeping rebellion, some parts of this important public work have been allowed to fall into decay, with the consequence that regions once prosperous now look arid and barren, and villages and towns which for hundreds of years were the homes of busy hives of the most industrious of men, are now falling into decay, and, in some instances, are almost deserted. It is true that the authorities often talk about undertaking the repair of the Canal. One savant has written a treatise on its hydrology extending, it is said, to forty volumes, and other officials are almost equally industrious in compiling reports. But the genius of Yu, the famous engineer, who deepened the channels and drained the flat, is yet wanting to these literary hydrologists, and meantime China is becoming a desert in its very best portions. As a specimen of the reckless policy adopted, it may be noted that there used to be a brick-faced dyke at Kao-chia-yen, but the bricks were used to build a wall around Chingchiang-pu, on the old course of the Yellow River. Accordingly, should its waters chance to return, incalculable damage would be done.\* Another large river is the Han Kiang, which is remarkable for the fact that, contrary to the rule, it is narrow at its mouth, and widens as it is ascended, and in that, during the summer, its waters are high above its banks, and would therefore overflow the surrounding country were it not for the artificial barriers which confine it, and afford admirable facilities for irrigation. Sekiang, in the south, the Pei-ho (p. 29), which is the highway to Pekin, the Men, and Chu-Kiang, or Pearl River, are among the other principal water-ways of China. On all of these rivers there is an immense local traffic. They are covered with boats, and near the cities with thousands of floating dwelling-houses, in which are born, live, and die a large population, whose habits and mode of existence form some of the most curious features in the strange life of China. Mr. Thomson describes the "country boats" being towed along the banks, and even through the rapids by the united efforts of from fifty to two hundred men. These traders are natives of the neighbouring villages, and gain their living by this laborious work, and by pillaging the numerous wrecks which are thrown upon the shores of the Yang-tse-Kiang and other rivers. By law, all such wrecks become the property of the first person who finds them. Even were a junk to drift from its mooring, and in sight of its owner be carried to the opposite bank, the law would authorise the first man who seized it to appropriate it, provided the crew were not aboard. In ancient times

\* *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1879), p. 719; Colborn: Baber: *Ibid.*, 1883, pp. 441—458.



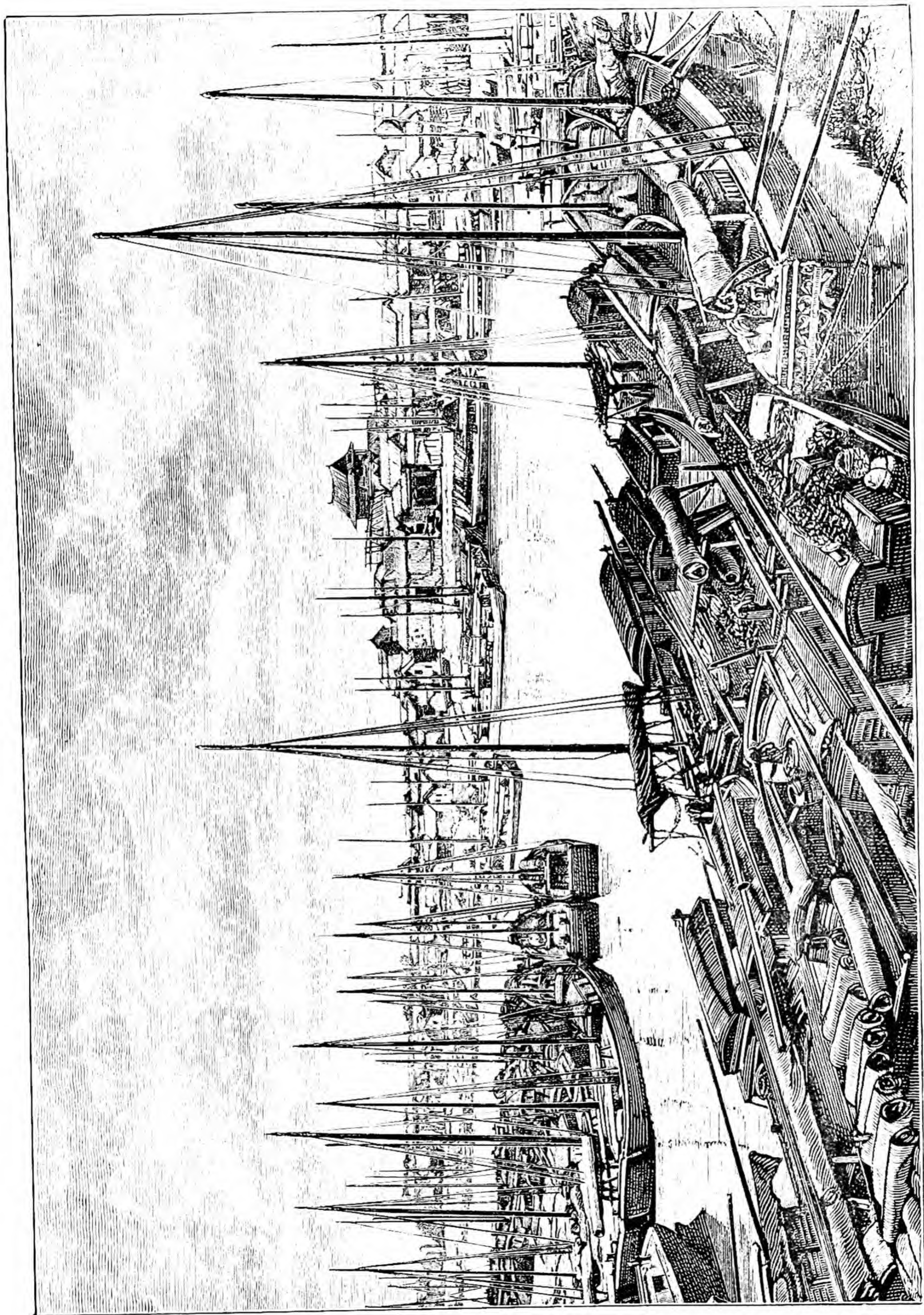
the upper part of the Yang-tse-Kiang was unnavigable, owing to its bed being completely blocked up with rocks. But the local inhabitants set to work and cleared out the channel partially. They have, however, been careful, Mr. Thomson notes, with true Chinese instinct, to leave some of the most dangerous obstructions, so as to profit by the fees paid for haulage, and out of the pillage of wrecks. Some day this river may form a route between India and China, but meantime the merchants who do business on its upper waters must be men of courage and energy, for to shoot some of the rapids in this part of the Yang-tse-Kiang is a feat which requires no ordinary nerve. Scarcely a week passes but



VIEW IN THE VILLAGE OF WONG-TONG, PROVINCE OF QUANG-TUNG.

some trader loses his all in these wild cataracts. But if he survive he calmly begins life anew, in the same perilous occupation in which the savings of years have been engulfed. The lakes of China are numerous, for not only do they drain considerable tracts of country, but, as in the case of the Toong-ting in Hoonan, and the Poyang in Kiang-si, they unite with the great Yang-tse-Kiang, and aid in increasing the noble network of water-ways which permeate the most populous provinces of China. The Poyang Lake is said, during the rainy season, when it receives the superfluous waters of the Yang-tse-Kiang and other rivers, to be nearly 300 miles long: then a great portion of the country in the vicinity is a perfect morass. At this season it is a wild stormy water, and when the wind blows its waters lash with such fury against the bank on which Nan-chang-Foo stands, that a strong stone harbour of refuge for vessels has been constructed. But in the dry season its





VIEW ON THE PEIHO RIVER AT TIEN-TSIN, CHINA.



waters abate so rapidly that, in the course of a few weeks, the Poyang Hoo, to use the words of Archdeacon Gray, "resembles not so much a lake as a river, winding its course towards the Yang-tse-Kiang between low banks of mud." During the dry season the peasants erect huts of straw on the land from which the water has receded, in order to be on the spot to cut down the coarse grass and reeds which the rich alluvium yields in great quantity. These they stack in front of their huts, to be afterwards sold in the neighbouring villages as fuel for the winter. The waters of this lake abound in wild fowl, chiefly geese, ducks, teal, divers, and pelicans, which are captured by the native fowlers, and sold in the cities that stud the banks of the great river which flows near by. These birds are captured in a curious fashion. "Sometimes," writes Dr. Gray, "he [the fowler] fixes two gingals [native firelocks] in a boat which is constructed to sit low in the water, and, laying hold of the stern, wades or swims, as the case may be, gently pushing the boat towards the wild fowl. When he has come within gunshot he discharges his gingals into the midst of the birds by means of a long fuse. At other times the fowler floats a number of baskets on the water, and when the wild fowl have become used to them, and swim close to them without fear, he covers his head with a similar basket and wades into the lake. By a gradual approach he tries to get into the very centre of the flock, and then he suddenly stretches out both hands, and generally succeeds in capturing a brace of them, which he at once deposits in a creel on his back."\* The Toong-ting Lake is studded with islands, one of which, much visited by the pious Chinese, contains many temples in honour of Buddha, and is the abode of numerous priests of his sect, who not only serve the altars of Buddha, but also those of the Toong-ting idol, or King of the Lake. On the "Golden Island" the tea plant is grown in great abundance; but as the tea grown in this locality is considered to prolong life, a quantity of it is annually sent to the Imperial Palace at Peking, for the use of the Emperor and Court. Tai-Hoo is another large lake—the circumference is estimated at 260 miles—surrounded by a pleasant country, producing large quantities of cotton, green tea, silk, and plastic clays, of which some of the best "china" is made. Three of the Chinese lakes are accounted sacred. These are the Toong-ting and Poyang—already noticed—and the Hoong-chak, which is in the same province as the last-mentioned one, namely, in Kiang-su. State worship is paid to the spirits which are supposed to preside over them, and on such occasions a sheep and a pigeon are sacrificed to the genius of the lake. "An imperial communication addressed to the genius of the lake is also read aloud, and afterwards committed to a sacred fire."

#### THE CLIMATE.

The climate of China is a rather comprehensive phrase. One might as well talk of the climate of Europe, for a country stretching through twenty-six degrees of latitude and twenty-seven degrees of longitude, must vary as to its atmospheric character

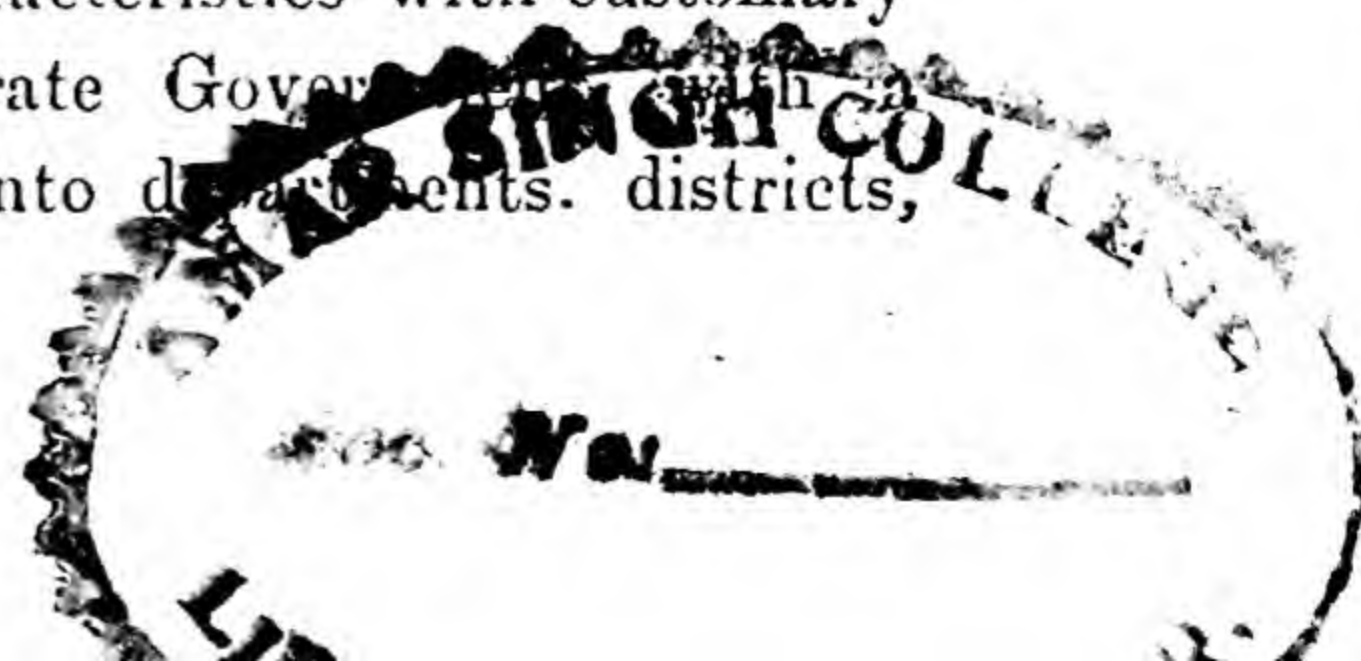
\* "China" (1878), Vol. II., p. 326. In "The Peoples of the World," Vol. I., pp. 261, 262, an almost identical mode of capturing wild fowl is described as being practised by the Indians living on the shores of a great shallow lake off the Gulf of Maracaibo, in Venezuela.



in different quarters of it. One peculiarity about it is that its temperature is, even in the height of summer, much lower than that of countries lying in the same latitude. For instance, though Pekin is a degree south of Naples, its mean annual temperature is ten degrees lower than that of the Italian city—a point of considerable interest sometimes ignored. In the northern provinces the winter cold is severe, and the midsummer heat severe. In July, August, and September the interior and coast-lying towns in the southern provinces are almost furnaces; and this is the period at which the dreaded typhoons arrive, as well as those virulent and epidemic diseases for which the country has obtained so fatal a notoriety. In the extreme south the southern monsoon begins to blow in March or April, and brings with it from the heated ocean annual rains, so heavy that their fall averages seventy inches per annum. This humidity, combined with the heat and the want of all sanitary regulations in the crowded houses and towns, makes parts of the country during the warm season very unhealthy. Famines rage at intervals, owing to the droughts and inundations, while the typhoons that visit the southern coast cause immense destruction. On the estuary of the Canton River the authorities calculated that, in 1862, upwards of 60,000 people were drowned, or killed by falling houses during one of these hurricanes, which lasted fourteen hours. From the south to the east they rage, and are not unknown in the north as far as Shanghai. In 1871, Hong Kong and Macao, the Portuguese settlement, were visited by a typhoon of great severity. But it may be said that as a rule the climate of the northern and inland provinces is pleasant, and sometimes even more than pleasant. During the winter season, that is from October to February, little or no rain falls in the south. Towards the end of September the north-eastern monsoon sets in, and continues to April, when, as already noted, it is succeeded by the south-western monsoon, invariably accompanied by rain, which, on reaching the coast, assumes the form of thick fogs, ending in heavy showers, refreshing at once to the parched earth and to man, exhausted by the heat of the dry air. At the change of each monsoon thunder-storms are frequent, but are usually neither of such long continuation nor so severe as those with which Great Britain is occasionally visited.

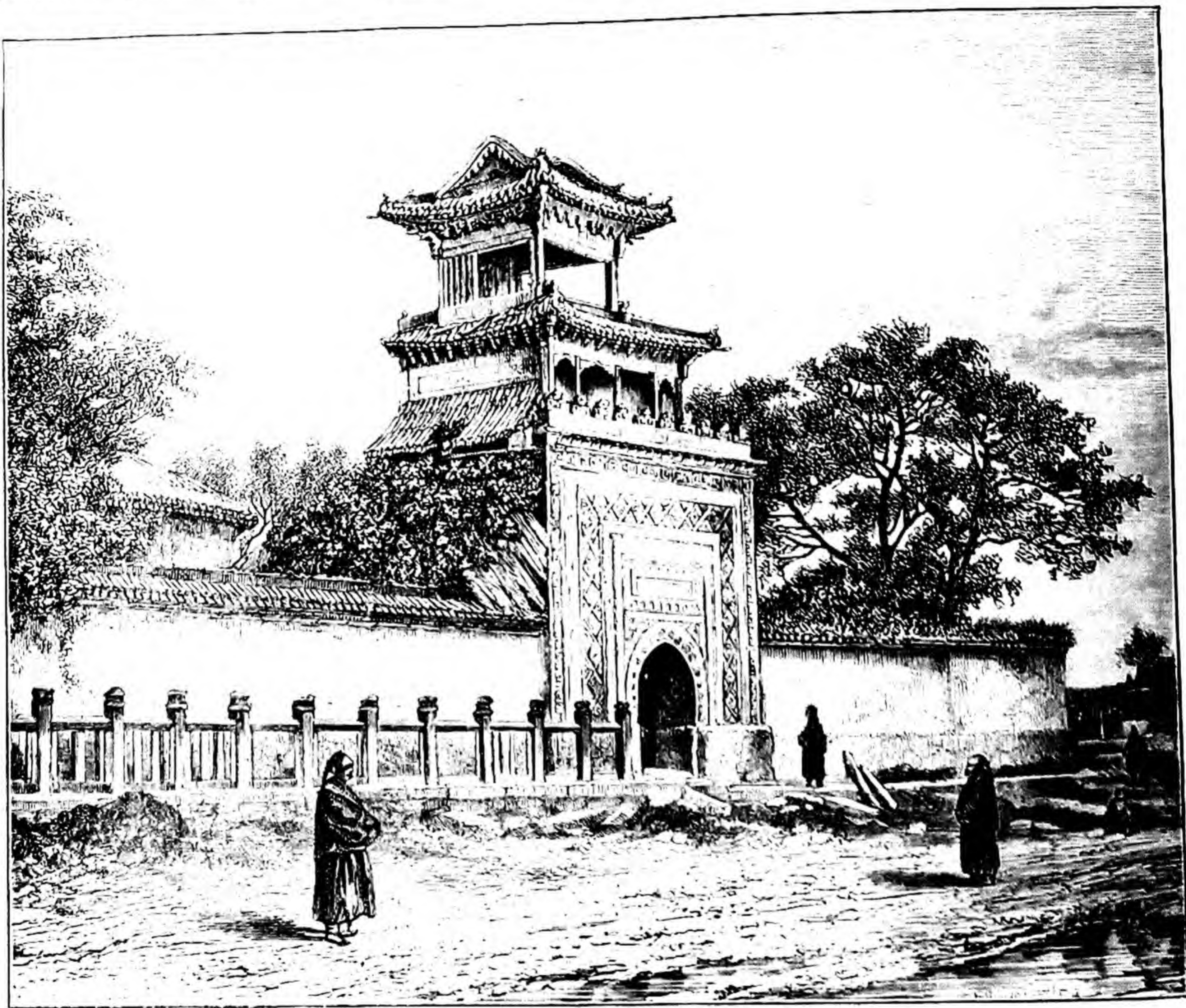
#### THE PROVINCES.

Roughly speaking, China (Maps, pp. 5, 24) may be divided into two great halves, the one mountainous, hilly, little developed, though rich in minerals, but sparsely peopled; the other consisting of plains and fertile valleys, highly tilled, and supporting, unless we except the Valley of the Ganges, the densest agricultural population in the world. The country thus physically distinguished is China proper, excluding Tibet, Tartary, and other dependencies, which we shall consider as Chinese colonies separately, or which, as in the case of Formosa, have been already noticed. The geography of the eighteen provinces, into which, for administrative purposes, the empire is divided, need not be gone over in great detail, for every map and every school geography narrates their bald characteristics with customary conscientiousness. Each of these provinces constitutes a separate Government with a capital which is a city of the first class, and is again divided into departments, districts,





and hundreds, which in their turn are administered from cities of lower grade in the civic hierarchy of China, the land being so apportioned that each city has under it an area corresponding to its class or rank. The lord paramount of the whole empire is the Emperor or "Tien-tze" himself, unless in cases in which a viceroy, who superintends two provinces, forms another step between the governors and the throne. Under them come the provincial governor-generals. Their authority is again delegated to minor officials, who further



MOSQUE IN PEKIN.

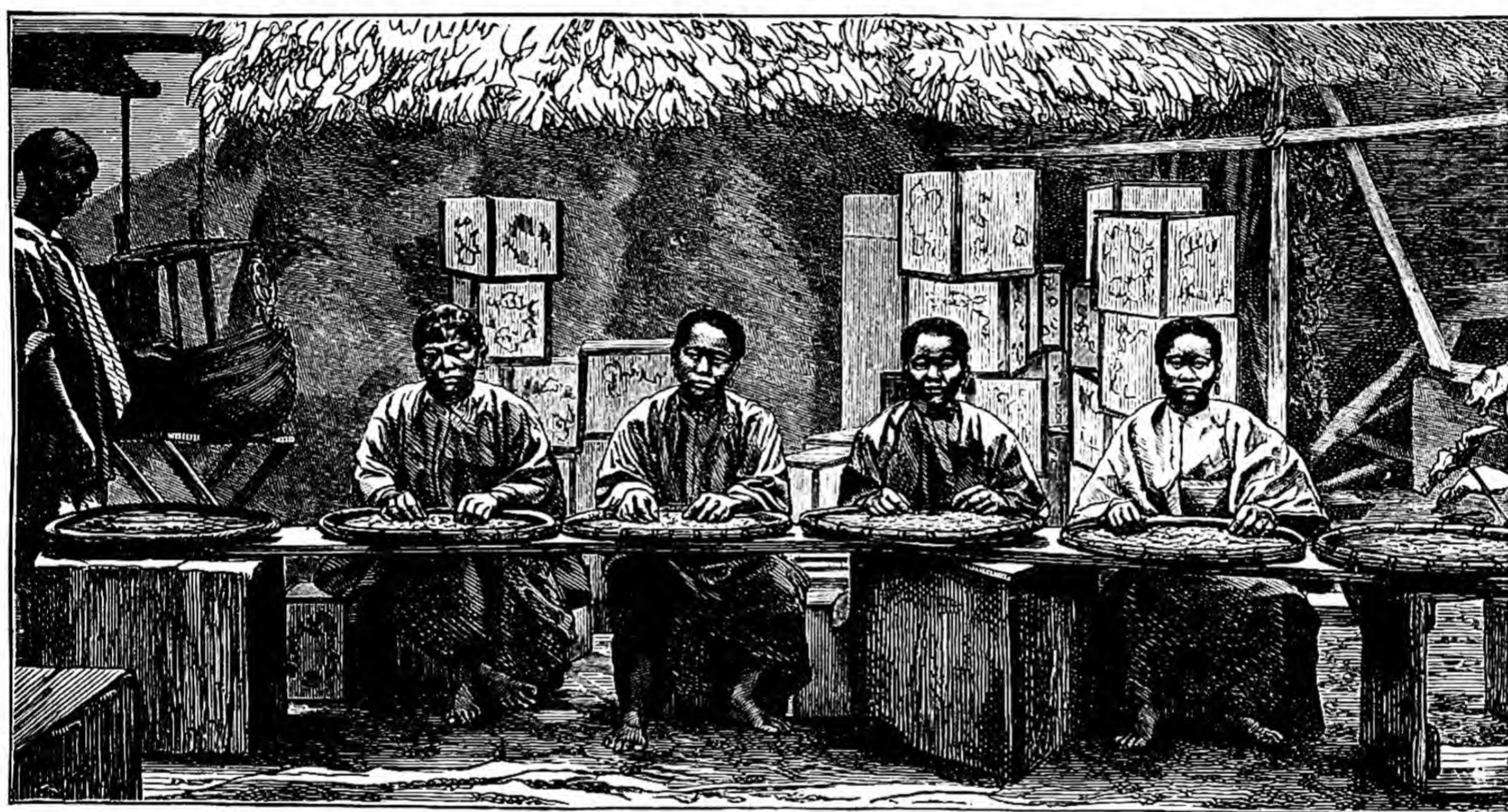
divide their responsibility with smaller mandarins, until at length the Imperial mandate, or that of the ministers who act in his name, is brought to bear upon "the mass of the people." Of the provinces, Kan-su, Se-chuen, and Yun-nan are the largest, all the other fifteen being very much smaller, though it ought to be added that their importance is often in an inverse to their area in miles.

In Pe-Chili, for example, in which is situate the city of Peking, there are said to be nearly as many people as in Great Britain, though its area is under 59,000 square miles. Among these are many Mohammedans. In the capital itself it is believed that there are over 20,000 Moslem families; and in Pow-ting Foo, the chief provincial city, about 1,000



followers of the Prophet. The whole province is rich in coal, as yet untouched for commercial purposes. "At Chai-tang," writes Baron von Richthofen, "I was surprised to walk over a regular succession of coal-bearing strata, the thickness of which, estimating it step by step as I proceeded gradually from the lowest to the highest strata, exceeds 7,000 feet." These beds are of anthracite, a valuable form of hard coal found in other parts of the province. Silver and gold also exist, but not in large quantities; but wheat, oats, millet, pulse, and other agricultural produce are plentiful, and an immense quantity of pears, apples, plums, apricots, peaches, persimmons, and melons is brought down to Peking.

In *Shan-tung*, which, unlike the last-named province, is mountainous, with fertile valleys, is situated the fountain Tai-shan, which has been famous in Chinese history for 4,000



SORTING TEA IN CHINA.

years, and for long has been the resort of hundreds of pilgrims. But though there are fertile basins here and there, and many minerals, the province is not as a rule a productive one.

*Shan-se*, though rich in minerals, is so deficient in agricultural capabilities that all kinds of food command high prices; and in the mountainous districts the people are often subjected to famine, and at the best of times to semi-starvation. Professor Douglas describes meat as being a rare luxury, and even salt fish, which is the usual substitute for meat, as being consumed only by the wealthier classes.

*Honan* is, on the other hand, a very fine agricultural region. The province is said to contain 30,000 square miles of coal-fields, for the most part untouched. So abundant, however, are coal and labour, that the best anthracite is sold in some parts of the province for 7d. per ton at the pit's mouth. Lead is also abundant. The prefecture of Hwae-king, north of the Yellow River, consists of a fertile plain, described as "rendered park-like by numerous plantations of trees and shrubs, among which thick bosquets of bamboo contrast with



the gloomy groves of cypress." The population is extremely dense, but by no means so numerous as in *Kiang-su*, which, with its 38,000,000 souls, is one of the most thickly populated parts of the world. It is magnificently watered by the Grand Canal, and by several rivers and lakes, and containing scarcely any hills, and no mountains, is, throughout the greater part of its area, well fitted for agriculture. Within its bounds is the famous city of Nankin, once the seat of the Chinese Court, and at a later day the stronghold of the Taiping rebels. Two other cities are so beautiful that they have their name embalmed in the Chinese proverb which says that "above them is Paradise, below are Soo and Hang"—that is, Soo-chow Foo and Hang-chow Foo. Shanghai and Ching-Kiang are also well-known cities, and likely in time to rise to be places of great importance.

The province of *Ngan-whi* is scarcely less densely populated, nor is its agricultural wealth inferior. "Peace and plenty" the Chinese call it, and from Baron von Richthofen's account the name is well deserved. He assures us that the exuberant fertility of the soil in the lower parts of the province is not excelled by anything he had seen in temperate climates. The embankments and system of irrigation deserve the highest praise, the result of the care exercised in utilising its natural advantages being that on the Kiang River the traveller may walk for miles through fields of hemp, the stalks of which are eleven to thirteen feet high, or through cotton patches scarcely less exuberant. The Shung-gan Kiang is the principal river of the province, and down it float to Hang-chow the immense loads of tea produced farther to the north and east.

In the province of *Kiang-si* is grown the celebrated "Moyune" green tea; and the black Kaisow teas are brought down from the Ho-kow district by the River Kin to Juy-hung on the Poyang Lake; while E-ning Chow, a city in the neighbourhood of which the best black teas of this part of China are grown, can be reached by another navigable stream, the whole trade finally concentrating as in a focus at Wooching on the lake so often mentioned.

In *Che-kiang* there are lovely valleys, rich and well cultivated, but few minerals, and none in great quantities. On the plains along the coast is reared much silk, and on the hilly country are produced large quantities of tea. Opposite Ningpo, one of the chief cities, and a treaty port, lies the mountainous island of Chusan, twenty-one miles long, and about fifty in circumference, in no way very remarkable, except that on its south side stands the walled city of Tinghai. Ningpo, though, as early as 1522, chosen as a place of refuge by the Portuguese, who, however, were twenty years later massacred by the enraged Chinese, has proved rather disappointing as a centre of trade, many of the most valuable products of the country finding their way to the greater market of Shanghai. The settlement is, however, in favour with the Europeans as a place of residence, mainly on account of the proximity of the Chusan Islands and the lovely scenery met with in about a day's journey inland from Ningpo. Here are richly wooded islands, with fresh bracing air, which may be also enjoyed on the Tiendong Hills, thirty miles or more to the south-west, and to which the Europeans make many excursions. "These hills, where dark pine woods shade quaint monastic retreats, where crystal rivulets and foaming waterfalls abound, make a very brilliant show in spring-time when the azaleas are in bloom, for these plants grow in wild profusion all over the district, and mingle with the ferns and



flowers common to more temperate latitudes. The tea plant also flourishes in this region, but it is only cultivated to meet the wants of the inhabitants. The bamboo, too, grows in great perfection, and spreads a pleasant shade over the houses with its graceful plumes."\*

*Fo-kien*, though a mountainous province, is, as its name signifies, a "happy establishment." The soil in the valleys is rich, and the hills are covered with the tea shrubs, and when they permit of this mode of culture are laid out in terraces. In *Fo-kien* is raised the tea which by a mis-pronunciation of the *Woo-e* Mountains on which it grows is known to us as *Bohea*, and a great number of the other characteristic crops of China, while under the soil are found gold, silver, tin, lead, iron, and salt. Some of the scenery among the *Nanling* Mountains is said to be unsurpassed for weird grandeur. These mountains constitute the boundary between the provinces of *Fo-kien* and *Kiang-si*, and the road connecting them crosses by the *Fung-shui* Pass. Here Mr. Thomson describes the track as becoming steep, narrow, and difficult of ascent, but nevertheless great quantities of tea from the district of *Hokow* are annually carried along the elevated defile in baskets slung on the bamboo poles of coolies hired for this purpose. In the romantic recesses of the *Woo-e* Mountains are situated hundreds of Buddhist shrines, and the homes of countless hermits, living here singly or in monasteries and nunneries, the good repute of which is not universally taken for granted. *Foochow* is the capital, but *Amoy* (p. 36) is the principal port for trade and for foreign merchants, who for over three hundred years have trafficked here, though not always without opposition. The tourist who wanders among the *Amoy* Hills and adjacent islands may still come upon gravestones of European traders and priests who were buried there over three centuries ago. The soil in the neighbourhood of *Amoy* is sterile, and incapable of yielding food enough for the large population, who, in addition to poverty, have to bear a crushing load of local taxation. *Fo-kien*, with its 23,000,000 people, is the province which Europeans know best, and it may be taken for granted that most of the current ideas about China and the Chinese have been founded on the observations of residents in or about *Amoy*. *Formosa* (Vol. IV., pp. 295-300) is a part of this province, and contributes to its prosperity, especially in the direction of the agricultural products, in which the coast-lying mainland is deficient.

The province of *Hoo-pih*—"north of the lakes"—is mostly a great plain, traversed by the *Han* River, which joins the *Yang-tse-kiang* at *Hankow*. Cotton, wheat, rape-seed, tobacco, beans, and vegetable tallow are largely exported. Gold is also washed out of the sands of the *Han* River, but in quantities not more than sufficient to be barely remunerative. Every winter the supply is exhausted, but in the course of the annual flood more is brought down and deposited on what the Californian miner would call the "bars" of the river. Baron von Richthofen calculated that the washers did not make over 100 or 150 cash † per diem, so that there is no likelihood of a "rush" to the *Han* River diggings. *Hoo-pih* is the central province of China, and supports a population of over 33,000,000. *Woo-chang* stands on the south bank of the *Yang-tse-kiang*, opposite the city of *Han-yang*, which is, however, nowadays little more than a place of official residence, the densely

\* Thomson: "The Land and the People of China" (1876), p. 33.

† 1,000 cash are equal to about 6s. sterling. The Chinese currency is, however, in a most chaotic condition (Williamson: "China," Vol. I., pp. 58-62, and Williams: "Middle Kingdom," Vol. I., p. 234).



populated suburb of Hankow, with its foreign residences, having almost entirely monopolised the trade. Hankow is, take it all in all, a very pleasant place to live in. It is well supplied with food, and the fine line of steamers between it and Shanghai render communication with the rest of the world easy. But it has this disadvantage, that the well-made roads in the foreign settlement are often submerged by the rising of the river at the end of the summer season. At such seasons the dwellings can only be approached by boats. "After the novelty of aquatic visits and boating parties has worn off, when the hall stairs have been transformed into jetties, and the lower apartments and offices into swimming baths, the residents, perched for safety among their mouldy furniture on the upper floors, look down drearily enough upon the brown flood that threatens to sap the



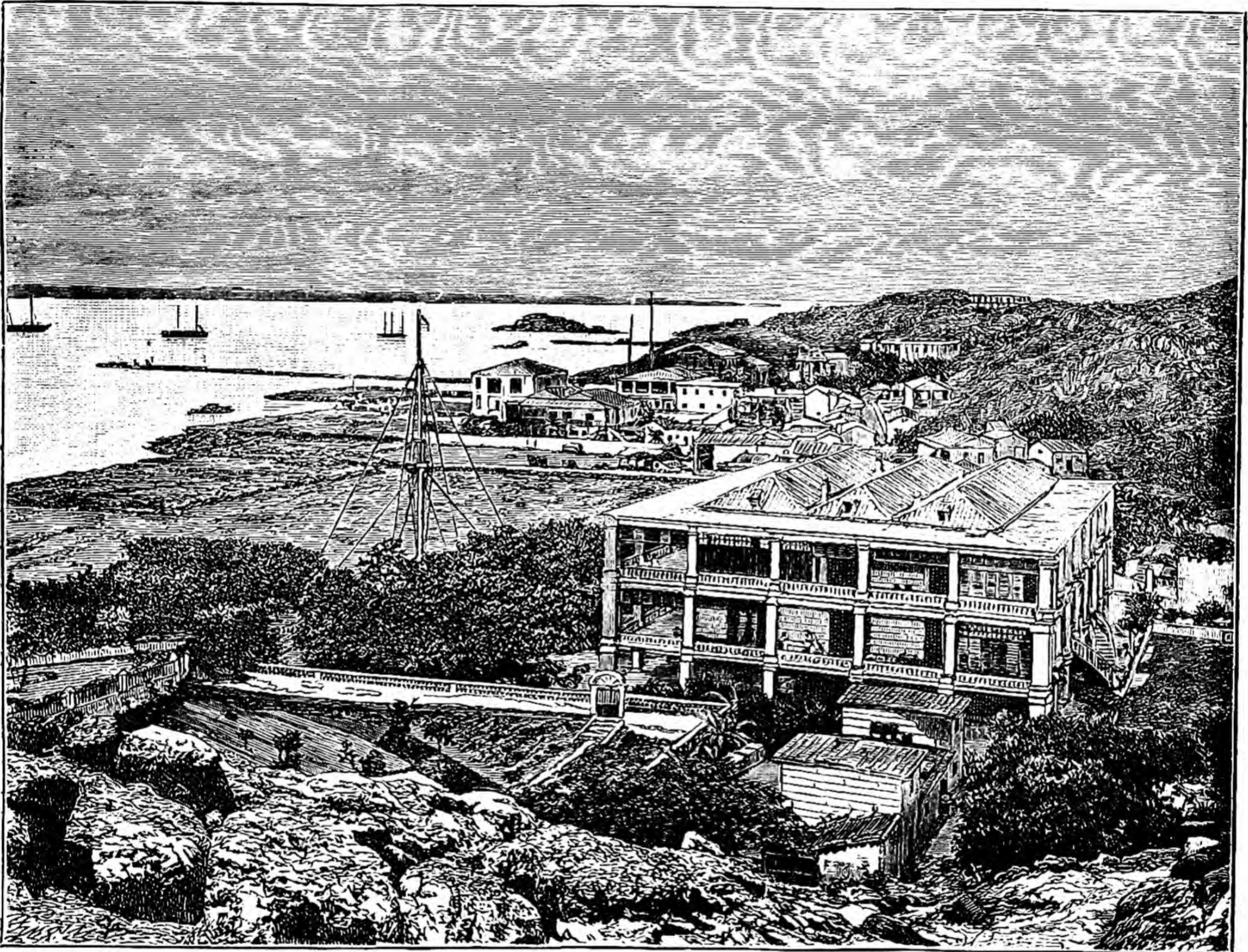
THE CITY OF AMOY, IN THE PROVINCE OF FO-KIEN.

foundations of their dwellings. It cannot be agreeable to have the poultry roosting in one bedroom and the children sleeping in the next, while a third is set apart for the accommodation of the milch cow and the native domestics." The neighbouring Chinese cities are not so pleasant. They look picturesque at a distance, but, as Mr. Thomson very justly remarks, a nearer inspection of the details reveals, as it often does in the East, the squalor and unkemptness of what looks afar off so charming. *Then* the mysterious effect of atmosphere softened and beautified the quaint houses; *now* they dwindle down into paltry shanties, "propped up over muddy banks by a multitude of lame-looking poles and posts, and disfigured by the slimy deposit of the river. The green slopes of the hills are dotted with wretched, ruinous tenements, patches of kitchen garden, and manure heaps, and their pigs are wallowing or fighting over reeking garbage; while, as for the children, they are as numerous as the vegetables in the garden plots, and as dirty as if they had been manured for growth there. Tens of thousands of boats are moored close



to the shores, each one with its family of small traders, who aid the general uproar and discord by raising their voices in praise of their wares. Such are the impressions that are apt to fill the eye and the ear of the beholder as he gazes upon a river-side population and its immediate surroundings."

*Hoo-nan*—"south of the lakes"—is a hilly province, the only level land being that which surrounds the Toong-ting Lake (p. 28), though this is in the summer covered by



SWATOW, IN THE PROVINCE OF QUANG-TUNG.

water. It is, however, intersected by rivers, and tea and other products are produced in great abundance, while the whole province may be aptly described as one immense anthracitic and bituminous coal field. Iron and lead are among its mineral deposits, and the timber rafts, dotted with huts, which the voyager upon the Yang-tse-kiang must be familiar with, are among the most noted wealth of the province. These rafts, indeed, are so thickly studded with temporary dwellings as to look like floating villages. By-and-by, as the great cities are reached, they are broken up for sale. The owners, meantime, transfer their huts to the river bank, and there remain until their cargo is disposed of. Last of all, they sell their huts, and then start for the mountains



to cut down another supply of timber, and pilot it south in the manner they and their ancestors may have been doing for centuries perhaps.

*Shen-se*—not to be confounded with the neighbouring province of *Shan-se* (p. 33)—is bounded on the north by the Great Wall, and before the Mahomedan rebellion, which laid so many cities and districts waste, was a prosperous region. *Se-gan-foo*, its capital, was for nearly 2,000 years the metropolis of China; and the basin of the Wei River, which lies to the north of the range of mountains which divides the province in two, is so situated as in some respects to constitute it the key of the Empire. For, shut off from the rest of China by the Yellow River on the east, and on the south by the range of mountains mentioned, this valley is on the high road to Central Asia, and hence in the possession of an enemy communication with Turkestan and other colonies in that direction would be entirely cut off. This accounts for the eagerness with which the province has, during all the revolutions of China, been retained by the Government for the time being, and the energy with which invaders and rebels have tried to possess themselves of it. To this day its capital city is well fortified, and contrary to the rule in China, the fortifications—enclosing an area of six square miles—are kept in good repair, so that the Mahomedan rebels, though they invested it closely for two years, were unable to capture it. From it roads branch off in every direction, and render *Se-gan-foo* an important *entrepôt* of trade, though, like the province, which is purely an agricultural one, it produces nothing whatever for the foreign market.

*Kansu*, in the north-west corner of China proper, is cut off from Mongolia by the Great Wall, though the jurisdiction of its governor extends over the Desert of Gobi to the borders of the Central Asiatic territory of *Dsanguria*. It is mountainous and sandy in character, and with the exception of a large agricultural community settled to the west of the Yellow River, its inhabitants are largely mixed with Mongols. The mountains, like those of *Shan-se* and *Shen-se*, abound in minerals—gold, silver, and copper, which, in the days to come, are destined to play a great part in the development of the oldest, yet newest, of the kingdoms of the world.

*Se-chuen* (also written *Sze-chuen*, or *Szechouan*) is one of the largest provinces of China, and, what does not necessarily follow, it is also one of the richest. Its varied surface—hills, mountains, valleys, and plains—yields an equally varied supply of products suitable for export, and its soil is bountifully supplied with coal and iron, as well as copper and sulphur to a smaller extent. In addition, it is one of the chief of the silk-growing districts of China, and exports an inferior quality of opium to other provinces, as well as white wax, which, in spite of the corrupt mandarins winking at the former traffic, is a more legitimate article of commerce. Tobacco is also largely grown, and *Se-chuen* is the only province in which the custom of smoking cigars is indigenous. Salt is made from brine raised from wells, and in one district petroleum is struck when a depth of from 1,800 to 2,000 feet is reached. Sugar, tung oil, barley, wheat, Indian corn, beans, rice, potatoes, &c., are among the other crops of this favoured region. Copper is smelted to the extent of 500 or 600 tons per annum, and sold at a price fixed by Government to certain concessionnaires, who, in their turn, pay a royalty to the Crown. The coal-mines may be seen all along the banks of the *Yang-tse-kiang*



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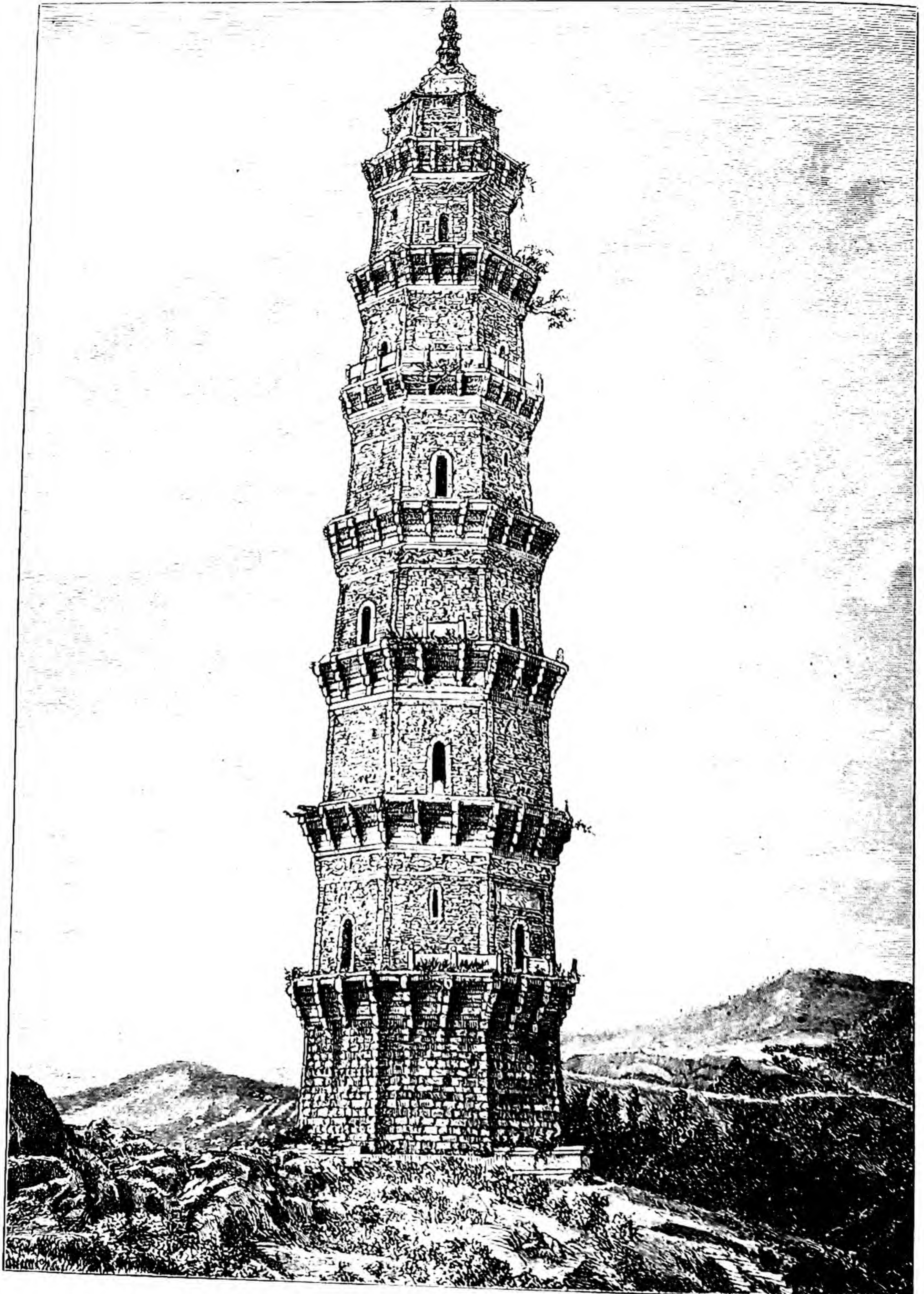
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A PAGODA, OR MEMORIAL TOWER, IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEI-CHOW, CHINA.



which flows—a tortuous highway for commerce—through the province; but the method of working them is very defective.

*Quang-tung*, or “Canton,” as the name has been Anglified, is one of the provinces of China which we know best, and the one which at one time was our almost sole source of information about the country. Its characteristics are well-wooded highlands and alluvial lands, especially towards the sea-board, near the mouth of the Pearl River (p. 61), which forms one of many inlets to the interior. The Quang-tung plain is indeed formed by the denudation of the highlands. This river has brought down soil and shoaled up the sea, and thus gradually turned it into dry land. At the present day it is intersected by a multitude of streams and lagoons on the western side of the estuary is the Portuguese settlement of Macao, founded in 1557. The delta lies so low that it cannot be descried from seaward until vessels get close in shore; but it is exceedingly fertile, and is occupied in every available foot for the careful cultivation of sugar, rice, tobacco, the mulberry tree, and kitchen vegetables. The city of Fatshan, near which Keppel destroyed the Chinese fleet during the “Opium War,” is the Sheffield of China, but the blades produced are not very remarkable either for keenness of edge, temper, or other qualities. Silk, tea, cassia twigs and buds, matting, fire-crackers, sugar, and palm-leaf fans—the last of which are sent to New York alone to the extent of from four to five millions per annum—form the principal articles of export. Coal abounds, but, as in the case of the iron manufactures, none of it is sent out of the country. Off the coast lie many islands, such as Hainan, which is about 100 miles long, and not much less in breadth, and is very mountainous, except in the north, where there is a plain of some extent. This island possesses gold and other riches, some of which reach the cities of Canton and Swatow (p. 37), the treaty ports of the province, though, since the opening of Kien-chow, on the northern coast of Hainan, some of the island trade has been diverted in that direction (pp. 26, 28).

*Quang-si* is a less important province, mountainous in the south and east, but level or hilly in the north, and is intersected by the Si-kiang and the Kwei-kiang, or Cinnamon River. On the mountains large-sized timber is reared, lower down the all-important bamboos, and in the fertile valleys the usual food staples. On the hot humid marsh-lands of the south rice is raised, but the people suffer from the relaxing character of the climate.

*Quei-chow* is a smaller and even more thinly populated province—that is, speaking of the population from the Chinese standpoint, which must always be comparative, for it has really more inhabitants than all the Australian colonies put together, and about three times the number the United States possessed when they began the world for themselves—in other words, it has about 7,700,000. It is, with the exception of the plains in the central and northern regions, mountainous, and has been for long in a chronic state of disturbance, owing to the manner in which the aboriginal tribes of Meaou-tze, who are the original owners of the soil, have been maltreated by the Chinese officials. The Yun-nan rebellion also reached some of the south-western districts, and, in addition, the unhealthiness of the climate has almost ruined the trade of this part of the empire. Its agriculture is limited, but its mines of copper, silver, and lead are valuable, and its quicksilver can compete in quality and quantity with that of any part of the world. Realgar, orpiment, and coal are also shipped, and silk forms a regular article of commerce.



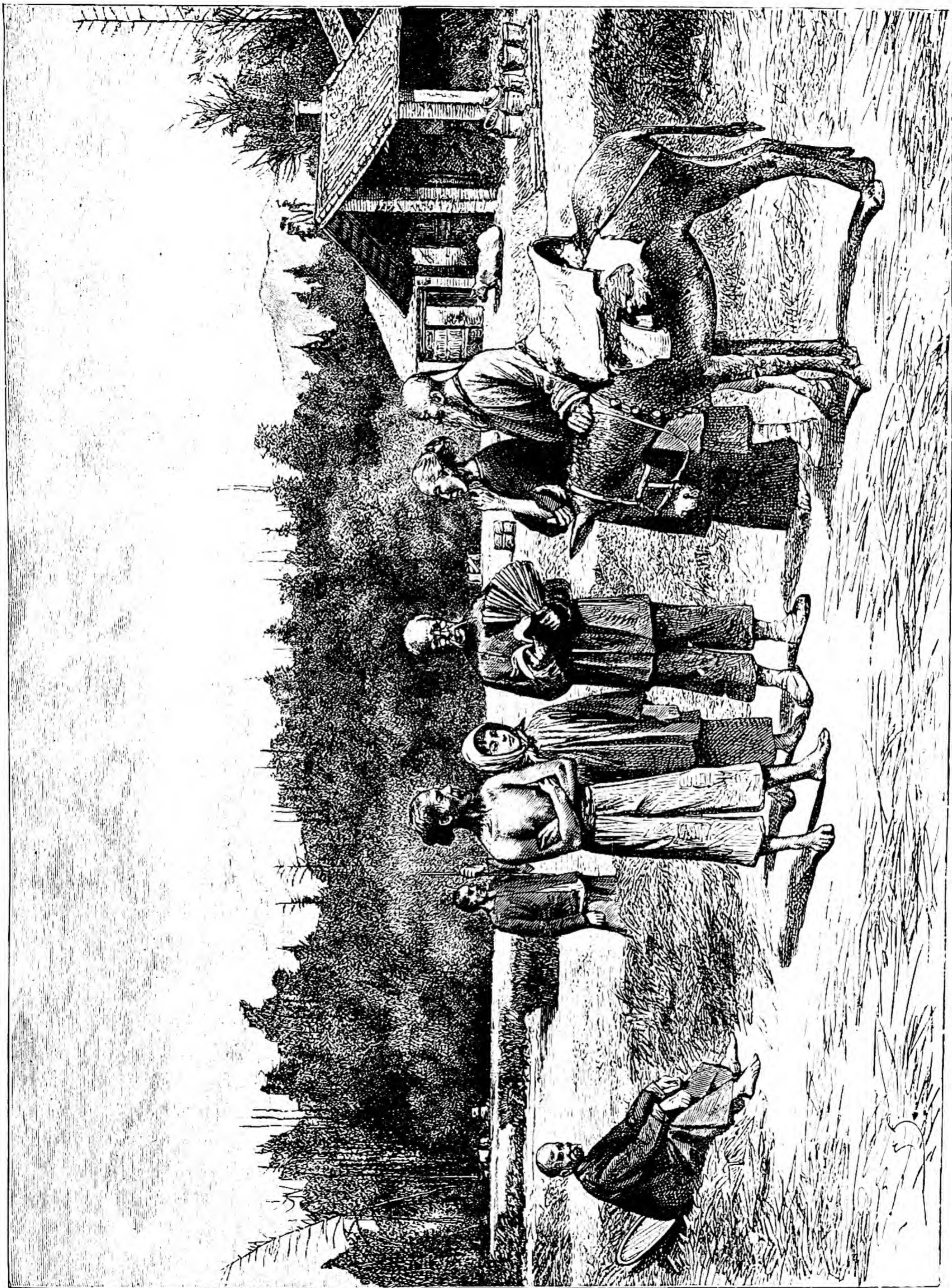
*Yun-nan* is a large but thinly-peopled province, consisting of plains, with valleys, and in the north it is broken up by mountains, and everywhere intersected by large rivers and lakes. The province lies along the frontiers of Tibet and Burmah, and accordingly it has been proposed to open up a trade route between India and China by way of the Brahmapootra and Yang-tse-kiang, the space between the two rivers to be connected by a road 250 miles long. But up to date this great work has not been achieved, although for ages there have existed important trade routes between China and the neighbouring countries passing through this province,\* and along which considerable commerce passes. Gold, tin, silver, lead, zinc, copper, precious stones, &c., are all found; and in common with silk, musk, gum, and ivory, form articles of export, while the tea of southern Yun-nan is appreciated throughout the empire. The opium is of very poor quality. Though the country is rich, it is little developed, and, owing to the recently crushed Panthay or Mohammedan rebellion, is not likely for a time to recover the limited prosperity which it formerly enjoyed. Its population has in twenty years fallen from sixteen to four millions.

*Shing-king*—not always included among the Chinese provinces, as it is properly the government of Southern Manchuria—though mostly mountainous, with many plains, is extremely fertile, but in the vicinity of the sea covered with a saline exudation which renders all efforts at culture hopeless. In the summer the country suffers great heat, in the winter extreme cold; but the climate is healthy, and to an Englishman home-like, the English trees and shrubs growing well, and the general facies and scenery being rather European than Asiatic, or, in other words, like the Amoor country which adjoins it. Mr. Williamson describes the plains as monotonous, but pleasant, owing to the numerous villages embosomed in foliage, and surrounded by well-cultivated fields, in which is heard the crack of the ploughman's whip, or the joyous song carolled forth by peasants on whom the decrees of Peking sit but lightly. The hill country is, however, extremely picturesque. "Ever-changing views, torrents, and fountains, varied and abounding vegetation, flocks of black cattle grazing on the hill-sides, goats perched on the overhanging crags, horses, asses, and sheep on the less elevated regions, numerous well-built hamlets everywhere, enliven the scene; while a clear blue canopy overspreading all, and fine bracing air, make the country delightful to the traveller." Wheat, barley, millet, oats, maize, cotton, indigo, and tobacco are its crops; but coal, iron, and gold, though little worked, exist. It is so rapidly being settled, and in many respects is so like the rest of China, that we have preferred to treat it here rather under the head of the outlying parts of the Empire.

It thus appears that there is really little of anything in Europe which China needs or cannot produce. Its coal and iron are inexhaustible, but the former is worked but slightly, lest—so the professors of *feng-shui* or "geomancy" declare—the "plain of the earth" should capsize by the balance being destroyed when the loads of fuel are extracted, while the ores are, perhaps on that account, but little smelted, and in most places only by wood. No land has a more magnificent soil, or one in which art does more for nature. The great "loess" plain, extending over an area of 250,000 square miles, comprises

\* Anderson: "Mandalay to Momi" (1876); Richthofen: "China: Ergebnisse eigener Reisen und darauf gegründeter Studien" (1877-8); Baber: *Proc. R. G. S.* 1883, pp. 441-458; and "Supplementary Papers," Vol. I., pp. 1-201.





FARM IN THE PROVINCE OF QUANG-TUNG.



much of the province of Pe-chili, all of that of Shan-se, the northern part of Shen-se, Kan-su, and northern Ho-nan. It consists of a solid but friable earth of a brownish-yellow colour, which overlays the subsoil to the depth often of 1,000 feet. Professor Douglas describes it as having a "tendency to vertical cleavage, and wherever a river cuts into it, the loess encloses it between perpendicular cliffs 500 feet in height. These, when washed by the water, are speedily undermined, and the loess breaks off in vertical sheets, which fall into the river, and are carried down by the stream." In this way the Great Plain has been formed (p. 26), and through the means described the Gulf of Pe-chili and the Yellow Sea are shoaling up. To the Chinese this earth is of the utmost value, for wherever found—in the lowlands or on the hills at an elevation of 7,000 or 8,000 feet—it is available for the purposes of agriculture, and yields abundantly without the application of manure, and with a minimum expenditure of labour on the part of the tiller. It not only supplies the happy people whose soil it overlays with food for use and export, but in the cliffs which it forms on the banks of the rivers are dug numerous caves, used as dwellings by the great majority of them. Indeed, so important is it, that some ingenious philologists consider that one of the Emperor's numerous titles—"Whang-te," *i.e.*, "Yellow Emperor," or "Ruler of the Yellow"—is derived from the fact that he is lord of the loess, or "yellow earth" (whang-too). It is probably the residuum which fell to the bottom of a lake in days when the country it now overspreads was submerged.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### CHINA: PEOPLE; RULERS; TRADE.

IN a country so rich, the first requisite for its development is to have it peopled by a race capable of taking advantage of the opportunities at their hand. This China only partially is. In the first place it is densely populated by a nation chiefly agricultural or dependent on agriculture, and the want of manufactories prevents the surplus population of the cities and rural districts from being absorbed. Hence China is, under the present circumstances, densely stocked, though, were its mineral and other resources properly developed, it would not have more than enough of labourers, and these would rank among the most comfortable of toilers. The exact number of people in the Empire we do not know; it can only be roughly calculated, and the estimates vary from 425, 213, and 152 millions to not one quarter of that number. The usual statement accepted in Europe is that China proper—excluding Mantchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, Corea, Dsanguria, and Turkestan—contains nearly 383,000,000 souls;\* but a Chinese statistician,† who during past years has calculated the number of his countrymen, considers that if they are put at from

\* Behm and Wagner: "Die Bevölkerung der Erde," 1882.

† Kwang Chang Ling.



100,000,000 to 120,000,000, they will not be done injustice to. But Mr. Hippisley, of the Customs, in another calculation made in November, 1876, considers that the population of China proper is about 250,000,000, a conclusion not differing very widely from those at which Temple, Wade, and Baber have arrived. A census of the sixteenth century gave 307,467,000 as the number of Kien-lung Wong's subjects, but in 1743 Grosier considered that they did not exceed 200,000,000; and though various enumerations taken since that date give the population at a much higher figure, it is very doubtful whether some of the returns are not apocryphal, constructed to gratify the vanity of the Kinsman of the Sun and Moon, albeit, if in error to the extent imputed, they would rather rudely interfere with the financial estimates of his ministers. But the latest statist is of opinion that the Empire has been decreasing in population since 1761, and doubtless during the Taiping rebellion between 1847 and 1862 the destruction of numerous cities, towns, and villages, and the massacre of their inhabitants, must have materially reduced the density of the inhabitants of the Empire. The population of Peking is estimated at from 400,000 to 3,000,000, which shows how loose are the data we have to go on. Canton has, it is reported on the same vague authority, one million and a half of people; Tien-tsin, nearly a million; Hangchow, 700,000; Shanghai, 350,000; and the number of other cities with a population over 100,000 is considerable. A census of the foreign residents, taken in 1885, gives the following particulars:—

	Firms.	Persons.		Firms.	Persons.
English . . . . .	233	2,534	Spanish . . . . .	3	289
Americans . . . . .	27	761	Russians . . . . .	15	112
Germans . . . . .	57	638	Austrians . . . . .	2	80
French . . . . .	23	443	Belgians . . . . .	—	16
Dutch . . . . .	—	36	Italians . . . . .	3	165
Danish . . . . .	3	78	Japanese . . . . .	24	747
Swedes and Norwegians . . . . .	—	66	Swadry, uncertain . . . . .	6	729

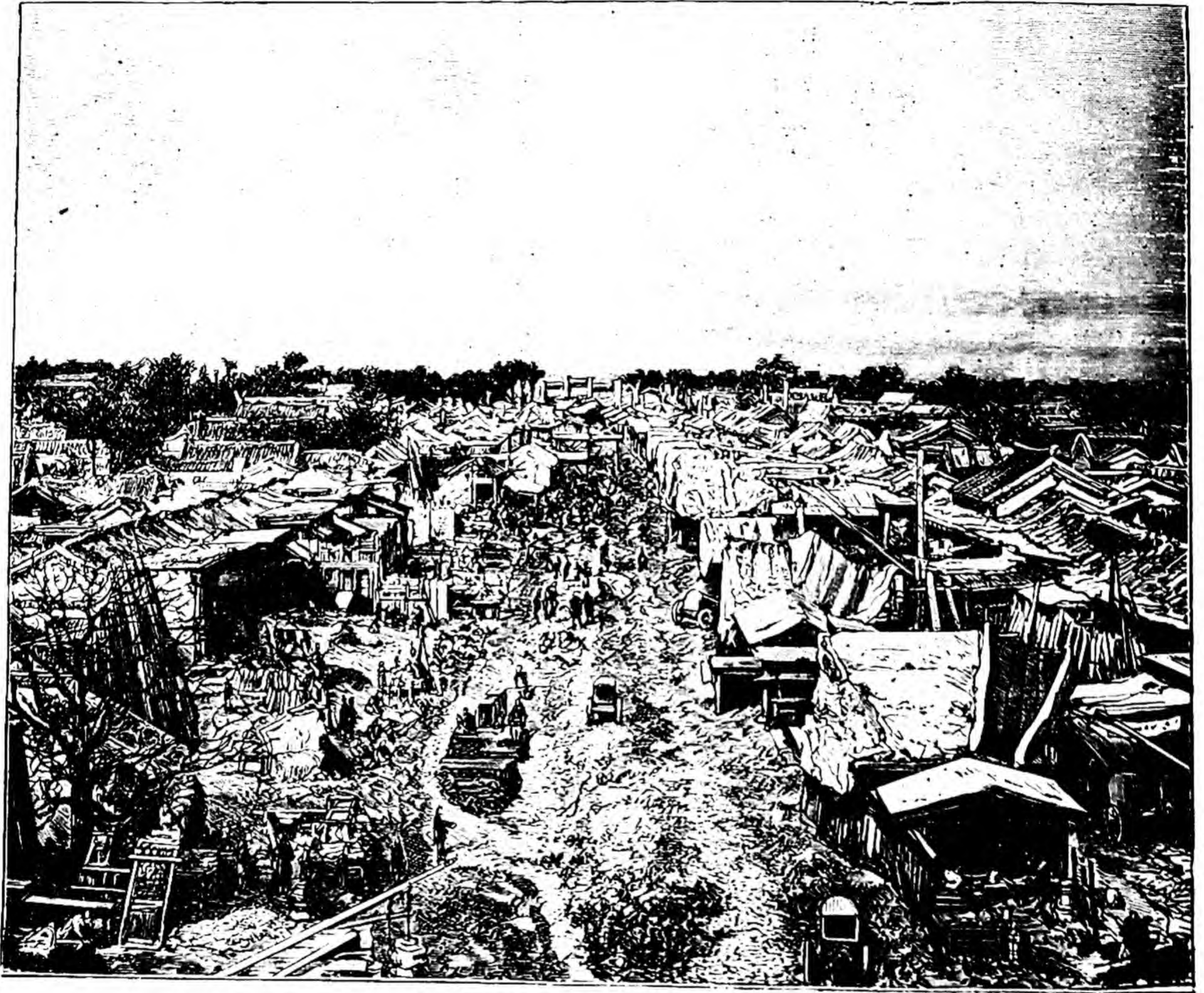
Thus the firms engaged in commerce are 396, and the total foreign population of the empire 6,694, while the population of the nineteen treaty ports, including those of Formosa, is estimated at considerably over 5,000,000.

#### THE NATION.

But even at the lowest figures given China is a thickly-peopled region, though to nothing like the extent of the valley of the Ganges, and the swarms of its people who are hiving off into other countries—tossing to the winds the traditions of centuries—ought, under other conditions, to find at home the employment which they now seek abroad. Of the character of the people at large it is somewhat difficult for a foreigner to speak. They must not be judged according to the Old World canons of morality, nor above all, meted in the European measure. As Archdeacon Gray justly remarks, their morals are written in strange characters more difficult for one not of their race to decipher than their own singularly compound word syllables. “In the same individual virtues and vices, apparently incompatible, are placed side by side. Meekness, gentleness, docility, industry, contentment, cheerfulness, obedience to superiors, dutifulness to parents, and



reverence for the aged are, in one and the same person, the companions of insincerity, lying, flattery, treachery, cruelty, jealousy, ingratitude, avarice, and distrust of others." But deceit and fraud are with them, as with all timid races, the natural defence of the weak, while, as the English courts of law abundantly demonstrate, the other inconsistencies of their character are not peculiar to them. The despotism of their Government, the gross superstition of their religion, the abominable cruelty of their judicial code, and their



HATA-MENE-TA-KIE STREET, PEKIN.

general ignorance, in spite of the fact that as a rule they are more lettered than were until recently any people in Europe, combined with the degraded social life which polygamy always entails, are serious disadvantages for any race to contend against. But still, those well acquainted with them pronounce the Chinese, as a rule, "courteous, orderly, industrious, peace-loving, sober, and patriotic." Mr. Seward, the American Minister at Peking, wrote a few years ago in much the same strain, and as his opinion is, perhaps, in some respects better worth quoting than that of a European, I think it worth giving in full. "The prevailing tendency," writes this experienced publicist, "among foreigners in China is to debase the Chinese to a very low place in the scale of nations, to belittle their



intellectual capacity, to condemn their morals, to declare them destitute of vitality and energy. Each person who argues the case finds facts ready for his use which seem to him to demonstrate his own view. I confess that the case is different with me. Faith in the race is a matter of intuition with me. I find here a steady adherence to the traditions of the past, a sober devotion to the calls arising in the various relations of life, an absence of shiftlessness, an honest and at least somewhat earnest grappling with the necessities and difficulties which beset them in the humbler stages of progress, a capacity to moralise withal, and an enduring sense of right and wrong. These all form what must be considered an essentially satisfactory basis and groundwork of national character. Among the people there is practical sense, among the gentry scholarly instincts, the desire of advancement, the disposition to work for it with earnestness and constancy, amongst the rulers a sense of dignity, breadth of view, considering their information, and patriotic feeling. Who will say that such a people have not a future more wonderful even than their past? Why may not the wheels of progress and empire roll on until the countries of Asia witness again their course?" The present writer sees no reason, except that worn out nations rarely revive. But it may be said that the Chinese have never gone back. Their civilisation is old, very old; but already there are signs that the new wine which is pouring into the empire is bursting the old bottles, and that though China has not been in such haste to clothe itself in Western garments as Japan, it will in the end, though not running so fast, make quite as much progress, and, as its wealth is infinitely greater, win in the race for the prizes of the new civilisation. Nor is their docility so great as has been usually represented. The many rebellions, often fierce and prolonged, one of which drove the Emperor off his throne, prove that the Chinaman, though easily ruled when properly treated, can be a fierce zealot and even a courageous asserter of his rights when the slumbering Asiatic tigerishness of his nature is roused. It is also akin to the bigotry of which we accuse the Chinese to style them unprogressive, exclusive, and dead to the advantages of European inventions. They do not wish for railways. How long is it since all England was enamoured of these, since scores of squires of all degrees rushed to the capital to protest against the iron horse coming near them, and from the pulpit and the press these inventions were denounced as ruinous to Englishmen, English horses, and English schoolboys' morals? Vaccination is still denounced, as indeed its practice is often condemned yet in England; and tramways were until lately—perhaps they are still—vilified as inventions of the Americans or of the evil one, the power of darkness and our transatlantic cousins being, in the eyes of the British Chinaman, very nearly akin. Occasionally a European is mobbed in the villages of the remoter parts of the Empire. This is no doubt exceedingly rude on the part of a people who never saw a Briton, and never heard much good of them in their dealings with the Celestial Empire; but only a few years ago the members of the Chinese Embassy were mobbed in one of the most fashionable streets of London, and at this day a strangely-dressed foreigner would fare but badly in some of the more outlandish parts of the Black Country, or elsewhere. The soldier in Goldsmith's story hated the French because "they ate frogs and wore wooden shoes," and would doubtless have put his sentiments in regard to our amiable neighbours into force had he caught one of them in a region less remote perhaps than those



parts of China where the "foreign devil" meets with rough usage. Even the Irish or Scotch have not yet escaped the prejudice of the vulgar English, and the inhospitable half brick is yet in some parts of the country the legitimate weapon for the insular Chauvinist to apply to the stranger's head. The man with the evil eye is in Italy a worse terror to the peasant than the wonder-working foreigner to the ignorant Kan-su herdsman. A woman accused of witchcraft was only lately burnt to death by some Russian peasants, and the authorities of *Chin* rank so far approved of the act as to award her murderers the most nominal punishment known to the law, and to acquit others. Connecticut Puritans, and among other English judges the learned Sir Matthew Hale, not very long ago were of the same opinion. Even yet in many districts of Great Britain a person supposed to be endowed with such occult powers would fare well if he or she did not make the acquaintance of one of those capacious horse-ponds with which rural England is so plenteously studded. The truth is, that those who superciliously criticise the Chinese display, by the very words they use, the selfsame prejudices they despise in the Mongols. For instance, Mr. Wingrove Cook \* is shocked that the Chinese rose has no fragrance, that the women have no petticoats, the labourer no Sabbath, and the magistrate no sense of honour. He thinks it something absurd for a man when puzzled to scratch the antipodes of the head, to consider the seat of intellect in the stomach, or the place of honour on the left hand; that he wears white garments when in mourning, and considers that to bare the head is insolence instead of respect. And why not? The left is nearest to the sun-producing east, and is therefore as honourable as our west. The brain is just as likely to be stimulated by irritating the scalp as any other part of the body, while it is not more absurd to consider the intellect in the stomach than to imagine, as do half mankind and all the poets, that loves and hates are in the hollow muscle called the heart. But the people are not stationary. The Chinese army is a formidable force compared with what it was twenty years ago, and foreigners are taken into their service whenever the Government finds that any gain is to be reaped by doing so. Arsenal are springing up everywhere, ships are being built on the most approved models, and arms—unfortunately—forged to a wonderful extent and perfection. Their embassies have gone to Europe, and those of Europe to them. They are amenable to reason, have no caste, and, unlike the other peoples of the East, are singularly free from religious prejudice. As Mr. Williamson points out, history shows that they have adopted every manifest improvement which has presented itself for many centuries. At the time when Caractacus and his blue-painted warriors were meeting Cæsar on the Kentish shore, the Chinese had adopted the Buddhist system of decimal notation, and had changed their custom of writing figures from top to bottom for the Indian plan of inscribing them from left to right. Every dynasty up to the present time has improved the calendar by the light derived from foreign astronomers, and in open competition Father Schall, of the Jesuit mission, was appointed by the first Tartar Emperor President of the Board of Astronomy at Peking. When the Emperor Kaugh-i began to print his encyclopædia in 300 volumes he adopted movable copper types, and to this day movable types of wood are employed in printing the *Peking Gazette*. The cotton-plant, the potato, the maize, tobacco, and opium, have all been naturalised by

\* Cook: "China" (1858).



them, while every year dozens of foreign books on science and medicine are translated into Chinese. The Buddhist religion—not to mention scores of other innovations eagerly welcomed by them—is a foreign faith, while the Taiping rebellion which shook the Empire, and at one time promised to regenerate it, originated in the perusal of a foreign tract, and was fed from the doctrines of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Chinese mind, though their system of government is doubtless sluggish, is not shut to new impressions, and the fact that the people take to them slowly is perhaps no cause for regret, for they will be all the better able to assimilate what they learn. Already, unhappily, they have learned enough, to prefer other nations' goods to ours. A race adroit in all the tricks of commercial knavery is not likely soon to be deceived by cotton plastered with dirt and size. For their own very ancient proverb declares that "the conjurer does not deceive the man who beats the gong!"

### THE RULERS.

It is really from the governing class that the obstacles to Chinese progress come. Sir Robert Hart, so long the Chinese Inspector-General of Customs, and one of the most powerful men in China, is very desponding over these factors in the history of the Middle Kingdom. Only an infinitesimally small percentage of the officials have a glimmering of what is meant by progress, and a still smaller number are prepared to boldly enter upon the path of reform, or even to take the consequences of an initiative. Indeed, of late years, the example of Japan is often held up as a warning to over-enthusiastic reformers. The Chinese system of competitive examinations, as the tests for every office, is not the best to secure enlightened officials; but of late years even this has been diverged from, the neediness of the Government having induced them in some cases to dispose of offices to the highest bidder, and to encourage the basest intrigues for place and the pelf for the sake of which place is desired. This lamentable result is tersely described in a report from the British Consul at Chefoo, in the province of Shan-tung:—"Large tracts of land," he remarks, "which might be covered with vines (to which cultivation the climate is peculiarly favourable), as the hills by the Rhine and Moselle, produce nothing but stunted weeds. Rivers which, by a little deepening, might be made highways of commerce and centres of irrigation, wind their way through shallow sands and undrained marshes, carrying their wealth of water to the sea. Noble lakes, which by a little trouble could be made into valuable reservoirs, periodically overflow their banks, and devastate the fields they should fertilise, and choke up the water highways they should keep full and clear. Natural routes, winding through hills of gentle gradients, and of just sufficient altitude to afford good drainage, only requiring a few shovelfuls of the stone that abounds in the neighbourhood to make them into excellent roads, are by neglect utterly impassable at all times by wheeled conveyances, and after a small shower of snow, even by pack mules. A little surreptitious washing of a few streams is all the advantage taken of the rich store of gold in the province; the silver mines have been closed, and the same neglect and obstruction are evinced with regard to the less precious but equally valuable metals, such as tin, lead, iron, and copper. Coal exists all over the province, and



at points whence it could be transported with ease to centres of industry, and to ports in which are anchored many steamers of Chinese and foreign nationality. In a country where thousands starve annually from the cold, where every weed and stick are valuable for fuel, the best of fuel lies on the ground with no one to pick it up, while coal imported from Australia and Japan not only feeds the steamers, but also the furnaces of the native blacksmiths and ironmongers. The fine marble, the granite, the splendid sandstone to be seen stretching hundreds of feet without a flaw, which might erect magnificent palaces, are only carved into a few tombstones, or picked out to build cottages and pigsties. An



TRADESMAN OF TIEN-TSIN, THE TREATY PORT OF THE PROVINCE OF PE-CHILI.

industrious and stalwart population, pre-eminently sober and law-abiding, incapable, it is true, of the larger commercial undertakings, such as railways and steamboat companies, without also the high intelligence of our artisans, yet peculiarly apt at the smaller branches of trade, and with a fair skill in the ruder arts, are kept in bondage by ignorance, unrelieved by religious feelings and aspirations, and, under the yoke of bad laws and worse administration, have their intelligence stunted and individuality destroyed; condemned to a state of hand-to-mouth poverty, they enjoy at the best of times but a vegetable prosperity, and on the failure of a single harvest perish by thousands of starvation."

Add to this, that thousands are leaving the country to settle in the Malay Islands, Australia, and America, and the condition at which China has arrived can be imagined. In



spite of the enactments against their reception, it is all but certain that before long the industrious Chinaman will become the principal labouring element, not only in America, but in Europe. The European is aristocratic, generally disliking manual toil, and aspires, wherever he can, to anything rather than the obscure life of the "working man." In a few years, as wild lands are being settled up, Europe, and even America, will find itself face to face with the problem of how best it can find hands for handicraft. Then, when the time has arrived, will appear the Chinaman as the *deus ex*



CHINESE ARTILLERYMEN.

*machina* who is to solve the problem. In fifty years steamers will transport, at fabulously low prices, the teeming Mongols to all parts of the world, and then in European cities will arise Chinese quarters, inhabited by a race who have fixed themselves amongst us as surely as have the Jews; and who at first will create as much discontent and prejudice in their capacity of toilers as have the other Orientals in their chosen role of keen traders in money, and in the most money-making merchandise. Undoubtedly we shall see Chinese workmen in Europe sooner than we imagine, or than the directors of labour organisations care to conceive.\* The Government is essentially patriarchal. The

\* On this question, see a thoughtful article in *Annales de l'Extrême Orient*, November, 1879.



Emperor is the father of his people, and is supposed to rule his subjects as a parent rules his children; but though the people are bound to obey the ruler in everything, at the same time their philosophers, from Confucius to Mencius, taught the sacred duty of rebellion, and of even executing the Emperor, when he diverged from the path of rectitude and oppressed the nation. These doctrines the numerous rebellions of China prove to have been attended to. The Emperor is otherwise viewed almost as a divine person—the intermediary between heaven and earth—and to the common people he is a personage so awful, that unless they picture him sitting astride the sacred dragon, he conveys to them no resemblance to anything tangible. He is the “son of Heaven,” the representative of God upon earth; the source of law, office, power, honour, and emolument, and the owner of the soil, the resources and wealth of the whole country. He is the controller of “Tien-hia”—all under heaven, or “within the four seas;” he is the “lord of ten thousand years,” the “imperial sublime,” the “Kwa jen”—the “man who stands by himself”—or “Kwa kuin,” the “solitary prince,” who represents, or did represent, the embassies which came to him merely as the messengers of “niu-i” and “wai-i,” the internal and external barbarians coming to do homage to their liege lord. So ignorant are the people of any other nations that they suppose the English only to be a tribe somewhere on the outside of the empire, and therefore that they all know each other. It must not, however, be supposed that the term “foreign devil,” commonly applied to the Europeans and Americans, is intended to be contemptuous. Rather it expresses the wondering awe and mystery with which we are regarded, as is evinced by the fact that a distinguished foreigner is commonly addressed by the title of “His Excellency the Devil.” Yet they hardly consider us much superior to fools; and their country is to them the “middle kingdom,” which occupies four-fifths of the earth, the rest of the world being merely a fringe to it. “Not one Chinaman in ten thousand,” writes Mr. Hart, “knows anything about the foreigner; not one Chinaman in a hundred thousand knows anything about foreign inventions and discoveries; and not one in a million acknowledges any superiority in either the condition or the appliances of the West; and of the ten or twenty men in China who really think Western appliances valuable, not one is prepared to boldly advocate their free introduction.” This opinion was given several years ago, but it is still almost as strictly true as when pronounced.

The present Emperor, Kuangsu, was born in 1871, and is the ninth Emperor of the Tartar dynasty of Tsing, which in the year 1644 succeeded the native dynasty of Ming. The two great departments of state are the “Neko,” or Privy Council, and the “Chun-chi-chu,” or Secretariat of State. The Privy Council consists of three members of Mantchu origin and three Chinese.\* The four chief members of the “Neko” are known as actual members, the other two are only assistants. The duties of the Council are to generally regulate the laws and administrative affairs of the empire, and to counsel the Emperor on the high duties of his station; but of late years it has lost much of its old importance, most of the power having now fallen into the hands of the Secretariat of State, which is composed of the princes of the Imperial house, the members of the different departments of the Privy Council, and of the other administrators in the capital.

\* In some works its composition is stated to be nine Mantchus and seven Chinese, but in the latest official lists, where the names of the members of the “Neko” are given, the numbers are as I have adopted them.



It concerns itself mainly with the revision of the Imperial edicts and decisions, and the control of the different civil and military departments. Under the Secretariat are the six ministries or boards, each presided over by two presidents and four vice-presidents, partly Chinese and partly Mantchus, though the composition of the control varies. These ministries are the Boards of War, Punishments, of Offices, Ceremonies, Revenues, and Works. In addition, there are the administrations for subject countries, and those of music, of the censors, and of the military command of Peking. The censors are inferior but old officers, and are privileged to report any irregularity in the Government departments, and even to criticise the conduct of the Emperor himself. Of late this, like most other departments of the Chinese Government, has fallen into corrupt ways, though now and then some offender in high places is brought to condign punishment through the action of a more than ordinarily active and honest censor. In fact, the "Tou-ch'a-üan," or censors' department, may be considered a kind of court of appeal. In addition, there are departments charged with the Imperial *ménage*, and, above all, with reporting on the different members of the Imperial household, their abilities, marriages, and general behaviour, so that the Emperor may be guided by these notes in the selection of a successor, or in the dignities which he shall give to or take away from them. The Han-lin-üan, generally known as the "Academy of Peking," or Hanlin College, is another institution of Government, for from it are usually selected the ministers, while the important department of Foreign Affairs (or Tsoungli-Yamen) has sprung into existence since China has had intercourse with strangers. The provincial governments are almost autonomous, and theoretically are very perfect; but in reality they are corrupt to the core, the low salaries which the mandarins and other officials get being utterly incapable of paying their expenses without their resorting to the bribes and "squeezes" which are looked upon by every Chinese servant, public or private, as the perquisites of office, and, indeed, to which the people themselves have got so accustomed that they will hardly believe in any other system.

The Chinese revenue is only known by estimates, but according to the best sources of information it averages 64,000,000 taëls,\* or about £17,877,000. Up to the year 1874 China had no national debt, and even now its sole burdens from foreign loan are £5,000,000, bearing interest at 8 per cent., and secured on the revenue; and though there is a considerable amount of floating internal debt, yet it is nothing like what it is in Japan.

The army is composed of eight "banners" of the imperial guard and of the provincial armies, the latter being composed of Chinese alone, while the others are limited mostly to Mantchu Tartars, to which race the present dynasty belongs. In all there may be about 800,000 Chinese and 271,000 Mantchus, and not over 300,000 of this paper army is organised on the European model. The navy consisted in 1876 of 124 ships of inconsiderable size, but to this fleet there have been lately added several powerful gun-boats, three fine armoured vessels, and four unarmoured cruisers.

\* A Haikwan, or Custom House, taël is about 6s.

† Williams: "The Middle Kingdom" (1883); Guetzlaff: "China Opened" (1838); Doolittle: "Social Life of the Chinese" (1865); Pumpelly: "Geological Researches in Northern China" (1866); Edkins: "Religion in China" (1877); Medhurst: "The Foreigner in Far Cathay;" Thomson: "Straits of Malacca" (1875); "Illustrations of China and its People;" Eden: "China" (1876); Douglas and Yule in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1879), &c.



## TRADE.

The greatest portion of the trade of China is carried on between the different provinces (pp. 31-40), but there is also a considerable foreign commerce, though nothing like there might be under more enlightened rulers. For instance, in 1885, the last year for which we have full returns, the imports were valued at 82,200,018 taëls, and the exports at 65,005,711 taëls, of which the great proportion went to Great Britain, either direct, or to our colony of Hong Kong, which in time will be an *entrepôt* for British goods, to be scattered thence throughout the length and breadth of China. The East Indies also took and sent a very considerable quantity of goods, but the commerce with all other countries,



CAMELS OF THE NORTH OF CHINA.

including Russia, *via* Kiakhta, in Siberia (p. 13), was comparatively small. Indeed, it may be said that over three-fourths of the foreign trade of China are with Britain and her dependencies, the vast proportion of this traffic going on through the port of Shanghai, and consisting, on the one hand, of importations of opium, cotton, woollen fabrics, and metals, and on the other hand of the export of teas, silks, rice, sugar, cotton, and many miscellaneous articles. It may be added that more than one-half of this merchandise is carried in British ships, and a little more than one-fifth in those of the United States. In China railways have yet to be built. An experimental line was opened between Shanghai and Wousong in 1876, but next year the Government ordered it to be discontinued. The posts are carried through the empire either on foot or by carriers with relays of horses. Telegraphs are beginning to be constructed. Over 3,000 miles are already in operation, connecting most of the leading towns with the capital and the chief parts. Some 20,000 imperial roads permeate every part of the empire, though,



as has already been pointed out, they maintain them in a wretched state. The experimental line of railway laid down was torn up, not because the Government considered it useless or on account of the people declining to patronise it, but simply because the people patronised



CHINESE AND TARTAR LADIES.

it too well. Its success raised fears in the official mind that if it were allowed to go on there would be a difficulty in keeping the hated foreigners out of the interior, and that in addition, if they once allowed them to establish railways they would acquire a hold on the soil which might in the end produce complications fatal to the peace of the empire.



However, two small railways have been built since this date, and in 1887 a sweeping concession was granted to an American syndicate for the construction of railways, telegraphs, and telephones; the opening up of mines; the coining of money, &c.

One Chinese trading town is so very much like another, that the graphic description which Mr. Thomson gives of one will apply to almost all of them. The first impression which one of these cities gives when looked down upon is that of an immense mass of roofs, the intervals between the rows of the houses being so narrow, and the projecting eaves so broad, that a bird's-eye view fails to reveal the presence of streets at all. A closer inspection shows that these are exceedingly narrow, but crooked, and that the houses are huddled so closely together that fresh air can only be got—and then merely from a comparative point of view—by climbing to the roof. This is accordingly in most Chinese houses a common place of reunion, decked with flowers and furnished with seats. Here also along the sides of the flat space are arranged great jars of water, to aid in extinguishing fire, for even did fire-engines exist, the tortuous ways would not permit of their being brought to bear upon the flames. In order also to further prevent conflagrations spreading among the densely huddled-up masses of flimsy Chinese houses, here and there strong dividing fire-walls are built, thus separating the buildings into blocks. If a determined fire breaks out, the cardboard-like buildings within the limits of the fire-walls usually go, but the chances are it will stop there. Yet the Chinese crowd together for sociality rather than from necessity, for often in the middle of the densely-packed cities there are large open spaces which might be devoted to buildings instead of to agricultural purposes. But though many Chinese cities are surrounded by strong walls, pierced by triple gates, yet in the streets outside the ramparts the buildings display the same arrangement as in the more crowded spaces within, the fact being that the frugal Chinaman considers house-rent the smallest part of his expenses, and is very careless about the blessings of fresh air and breathing space. It is indeed wonderful to see the space into which a Chinese family will cram itself. The monotonous mass of roofs would give most Chinese towns a most prosaic appearance when seen from above, were it not for the break in the level supplied by pagodas, yamens, or official residences, temples, guild-houses, and in the southern provinces the square towers of the pawnbrokers' establishments towering above the others. Some of the Chinese bridges (Plate XLI.) are masterpieces of architecture, and many of them, as was formerly the case in Europe, are lined on either side with shops and private houses, so that only a narrow path is left open for passengers. The streets themselves are particularly unsavoury. Bad drainage blends its typhoid odour with those of charcoal, garlic, oil, opium, and tobacco; while the lower classes are, contrary to the rule of the rural Chinese, in most instances sadly in need of a bath. The shopkeepers, however, look rosy, contented, and prosperous, and many of them live to a good old age, and rather pity their *confrères* in the broad streets of Peking (p. 44) and Nankin, in so far that they suffer more from the hot summers than do the tradesmen, ensconced behind their counters in these shady alleys, into which the rays of the sun so rarely reach. There are, of course, as in Europe and America, more private streets, inhabited by rich merchants, who, however, usually live above their shops, and in the suburbs the villas of "retired people." But though a Chinaman, after his own



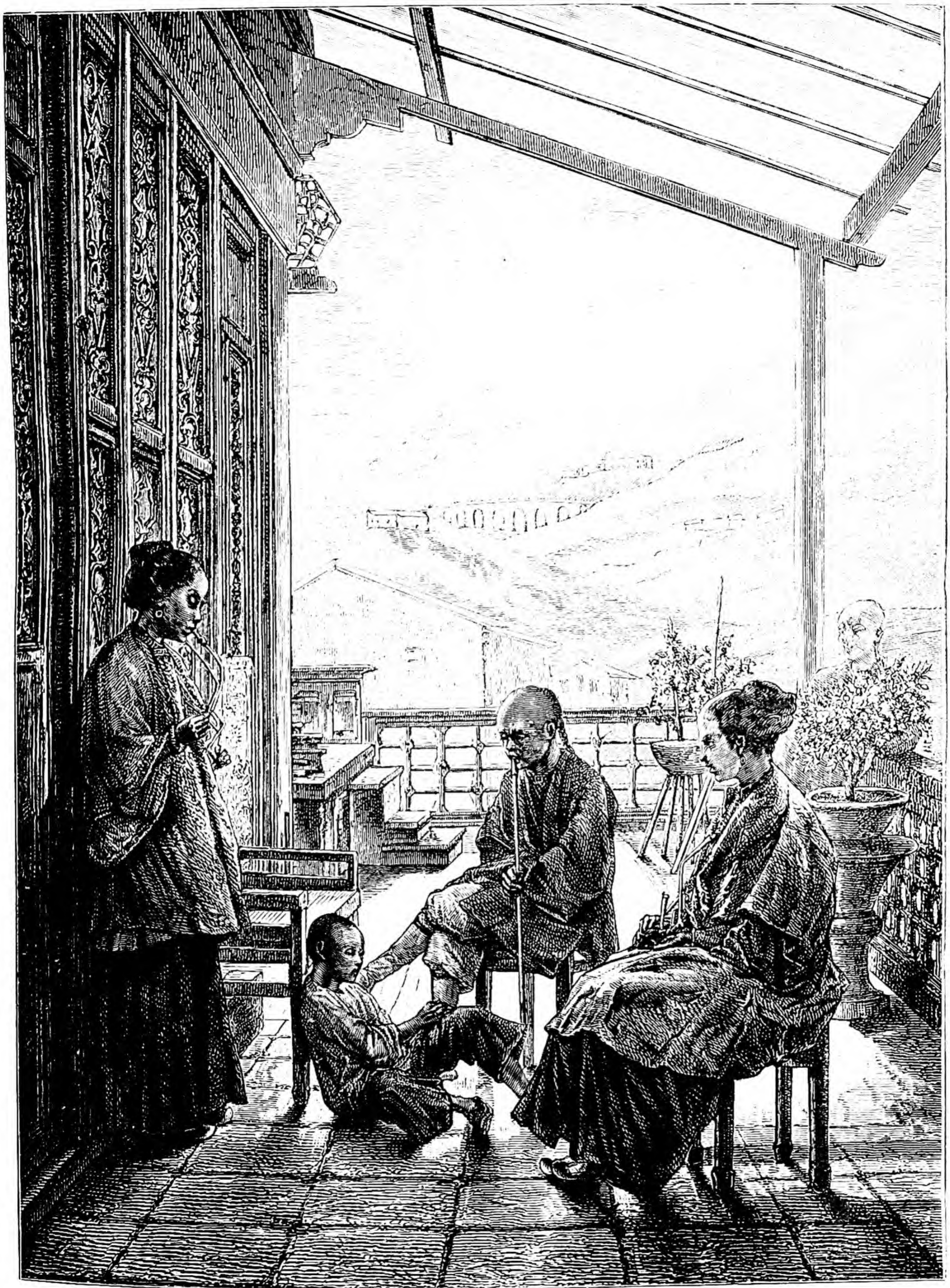
fashion, loves to be comfortable, he does not care for ostentation, and a visitor whose ideas have been moulded on the habits of the newer world would never suspect that the establishment he has entered was owned by a man who would even in the rich cities of the Western Hemisphere be thought wealthy. China is the "Flowery Land" of its poets, but the stranger who has not the *entrée* to a Sinetic paradise would scarcely coincide in the justice of this eulogistic phrase. All he sees from the outside as he walks through the suburbs is a high wall, which is in its way as much intended to shut out from prying eyes the preserve in which the rich Chinaman has ensconced himself, his wives, and daughters, as the high wall or palisades were to keep out of the Middle Kingdom the Tartar barbarians who now rule it. Climb a hill overlooking one of the typical Chinese towns, and the curious traveller may have an opportunity of seeing from above what he fails to observe from below. "There is a tiny landscape garden, with model bridges and model mountains, wherein dwell the blessed genii; living fish in little pools, just as in the ocean and rivers; rocks and chasms like the weird peaks, and gorges of Woo-e Hills; shady nooks beneath bending bamboos, where the ladies may bask in the smile of their lord when he is in the mood for their attentions. Here and there miniature pagodas and temples occur, or sometimes a real shrine, dedicated to the worship of the ancestors of the family. Food in abundance from unknown sources, rich and costly raiment to put on, paint to bring back the hues of health to the cheek which has shrivelled and faded even in this earthly paradise; above all, a living Chinaman to love and worship (or to hate, as the humour suits them)—what more can women want?" This, Mr. Thomson remarks, is to the Chinaman's mind "the perfection of human abode, the result of four thousand years' civilisation." In all that period it is questionable whether Chinese life—and, above all, Chinese rural life—has changed, for the descriptions of the oldest writers would apply equally well to the village routine of to-day. Indeed, rural life in China is very pleasant as things go in that part of Cathay, where a cycle of years is as a decade in Europe. The people are less exclusive, and the wealthy Chinaman does not think of barring out by walls his household gods from the glare of his neighbours, when he is all but certain that the "foreign devil" is not likely to be among them. In the cities the paternal care of the rulers, even when well disposed towards the people, cannot always reach the poorest of the governed. The mandarin may be a just man, who has not knowingly oppressed a single individual, but yet, owing to the rapine and villainy of his subordinates, he may leave his seat of government with the curses of the robbed people following him. But in a village, often the only authority the people know is the patriarch or headman of the "tribe," who is responsible to the mandarin for his conduct, and for the content of the people whose happiness accordingly, for his own interest, if for no higher motive, he strives to secure. The magnates of the village are some wiseacres possessed of greater knowledge than their neighbours, or who have the art of making them believe they are endowed with it, the man, white-haired it may be, who has passed some examination in the great competitive tournaments of the Chinese literati, or, in default of the village being honoured with such a prodigy, the local schoolmaster. The pedagogue may not perhaps possess any degree, but he can always explain, to the perfect satisfaction of his neighbours, that it was solely through the jealousy of



the Hanlin College and the literati, who dreaded his presence among them, that long ago he had not been called to the councils of the Emperor at Peking. The schoolmaster might, perhaps, if he cared, tell his neighbours who are the rulers of the land, but as the information would not make the rice grow better, or the pigs farrow more abundantly, village China is not very particularly interested in listening to such recondite bits of politics. It is enough for them that Ah Sam is their headman: and happy are the rustics who are not compelled to know more. This village life is really the best part of China, and the secret of how for four thousand years—perhaps longer—the nation has proved true to its old conditions, and remained, take it all in all, peaceable and contented, if not happy and prosperous. There are, as might be expected, occasional feuds in the village. The elders, or old men, are apt to presume on their time-honoured privileges, one of the chief of which is to occupy the best seats at any feast, no matter whether they are invited or not, and to exact what is, indeed, never disputed, the deference due to their threescore and ten years. The matrons wrangle and the gossips are busy, but jealousy, heart-burning, and the ambition to do much more than live by daily toil, are not markedly seen in rural China. In one or two of the southern provinces, or in parts of those provinces, village feuds were formerly<sup>a</sup> very common. Two villages went to war with each other, the combatants being in reality hired bandits or bravoos, who robbed the side they were paid to oppose, carried off their women, and captured the men, in order to torture and maltreat them.

These vendettas would often go on until the parties engaged were utterly exhausted and the Imperial Government found it impossible to collect the taxes. Then, and not until then, it interfered, though the villagers, indeed, dreaded the exactions of the Peking soldiers much more than they did the robbery of the banditti, and accordingly, at the first news of their advantage, flew to the mountains with what goods they could carry. In the end the robber chiefs were subdued, not by force of arms, but by bribes of money and titles bestowed by the central authorities, until in due time they found it convenient to transfer their services to another part of the country. Such disorderly scenes were, however, solely local, and occurred in those parts of the country which were far removed from the capital, imperial or provincial, and had been disorganised by rebellions or similar disturbances. The province of Quan-tung was long notorious for such raids, and is yet, especially in the vicinity of the mountain passes. The better kind of farm-houses and the residences of the gentry (pp. 41, 57) are built in the form of a rectangle, the walls of which, made of earth, lime, and sand, are often pierced with loopholes for musketry, and protected at each of the four corners with a turret or bastion, from which the defenders can sweep the entire sides and ends of the enclosure. Inside are placed the dwelling-house of the owner and the other buildings belonging to the farm. The villages in the quieter parts of the country are generally embowered in banyan or other trees, and over the entrance gate to the village ancestral hall is often placed a notice warning all whom it concerns not to injure the trees or shoot the birds roosting in them, as they “exercise a good geomantic influence over the village and the adjacent rice plains.” It may be added, for the encouragement of future travellers who wish to see the interior of China, that Mr. McCarthy, who some years ago journeyed from Chin-kiang to Bhamo, found everywhere





AFTER DINNER: A FAMILY SCENE IN CHINA.



on his long travel abundance of wholesome food. The prices in the good agricultural districts were very small. For instance, at the city of Liang-shan Hsien excellent beef and mutton, as well as the never-failing pork, was 2d. to 3d. the catty ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.), eggs five a penny, and other articles in proportion. Throughout the whole of his journey he received from the people nothing but civility and kindness, nor did an official even once ask him to produce his passport, a proof that the Chinese are on their part loyally carrying out the provisions of the Cheefoo convention.\*

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHINA: THE OUTLYING COLONIES AND TERRITORIES.

THE Chinese empire—either *de facto* or nominally—extended in ancient times so far that it is difficult to say what countries the Peking authorities do not consider a more or less integral part of it. Many of the Asiatic Khanates now under Russian rule the Chinese maintain passively to be theirs, while, as all the world knows, Kuldja, which constituted the main portion of their old province of Dsungaria, has been receded to them, while Kashgaria, which a few years ago Yakoob Beg wrested from the conqueror, has again fallen into their hands, to remain how long it would be rash to prophecy. Anam, Burmah, and Siam the Emperor is understood to recognise as really tributaries, whatever he may do diplomatically. The Shan States are no doubt considered in the same light. The Loochoos we have seen are in dispute (Vol. IV., p. 302), and though Cambodia and Cochin China have passed out of the Emperor's hands, the archives of Peking recognise the alienation of no part of the ancient territories of the Cousin of the Moon, and it is just possible that his ministers may dream of recovering in the fulness of that time Macao from Portugal, Tonquin from France, Nepaul from the Goorkhas, Hong Kong from England, and Amoorland from Russia. The last of these countries we have already described: Hong Kong it will be now necessary to touch briefly upon in describing the outliers of China, as well as those countries which, like Corea and Mantchuria, acknowledge, either as tributaries or directly, the rule of Peking.

### HONG KONG.

This little islet, though now a British colony, is geographically a part of the province of Quan-tung, off the coast of which it lies, near the mouth of the Canton River (p. 61). It is only about eight miles long and five miles wide, but within this area of thirty-two square miles—including the peninsula of Kowloon, on the mainland,

\* *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 489—509. See also Cooper: "Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce" (1870), and the various official reports or Blue Books. It is impossible in this place to give references to even a fraction of the recent works on China, for a bibliography of the kind would occupy a volume, so extensive has been the literary activity of visitors to the "Middle Kingdom." See also Colquhoun in *The Times*, Aug. 7th, 14th, and 16th, 1882, Aug. 20th, 1884, and Aug. 31st, 1887; and "Across Chryse" (1883).



on the other side of the Lyeemoon Pass, which completes the insularity of the island—is compressed a population of over 180,000, mostly Chinese, the whites numbering (in 1886) little more than 8,460, and the Indian coolies under 1,630. In ancient times this island shared, with various others, the name of “Ladrones,” from the thieving or piratical character of the inhabitants. But in 1841 Great Britain, during one of our little wars with the Chinese, took possession of it. Next year, by the treaty of Nankin, it was formally ceded, and in 1861 the opposite peninsula of Kowloon was added to the Colonial territory. The Chinese name means the “fragrant streams,” and in picturesqueness it well deserves this poetical designation. Surrounded by villa-dotted hills, 1,000 to 2,000 feet high, the harbour of the chief town—Victoria—is one of the finest in the world. Here is stationed a naval and military force, which can at any time be called on to protect our commerce, while in and about the town concentrates a large amount of trade, which has gravitated to it since the British obtained possession of the place. Opium, tea, sugar, flour, rice, oil, amber, cotton, ivory, sandal-wood, silks, &c., are largely imported and exported from Victoria; but the island itself produces little, and with a few unimportant exceptions it can scarcely claim any manufactures. There are municipal institutions in the town, but the Colonial Government is vested in a Governor, aided by an Executive Council of five, and a Legislative Council of nine members. The revenue was at the latest date £265,619, and the expenditure a little over £240,000. Its exports to the United Kingdom were, in 1885, £968,414, and its imports from the same source £4,062,182. Victoria Peak, which is in reality the island, is one of the most prominent landmarks to vessels making for the Canton River—and to the visitor entering the harbour of Hong Kong for the first time from the monsoon-tossed China Sea, the busy swarm of sampans, boats, junks, merchant and other ships through which he threads, form an interesting sight. Forty years ago the broad harbour, along the shores of which rise great warehouses, backed by fine villas on the cooler heights, was simply the haunt of a nest of desperadoes who infested the neighbouring sea. “Now,” to use the words of a recent visitor, “it is the great centre of trade and commerce, and vessels come from Bombay, Calcutta, and Singapore, laden with the choicest products from those lands for transshipment to England, America, or our Colonial possessions, receiving in return tribute for their distant countries in exchange for teas and silk, opium, and other requirements. It is already one of the most flourishing of our colonies in the East, and destined to still further extension and greater importance. It has become the postal terminus of the many lines of mail steamers that arrive weekly from Europe and America, and now, with the submarine telegraph, is in instant communication with every place of importance.” The offices and warehouses on the Praya, or quay, by the shore, are suggestive of busy commerce, and the wide streets, lined by houses built of stone, in the European fashion, crowded with busy pushing Englishmen, Chinese coolies, Indians, and Parsees, as well as by British soldiers and sailors, look, unless for the palanquins, which here take the place of cabs, very unlike any streets in China, though they bear a family resemblance to those which in time grow up in every town over the world wherever the Briton has made his home. At Hong Kong are held “the races,” to which visitors from Shanghai, Canton, and Macao hie themselves, as to the great event of the year, and in the city itself flourish all the



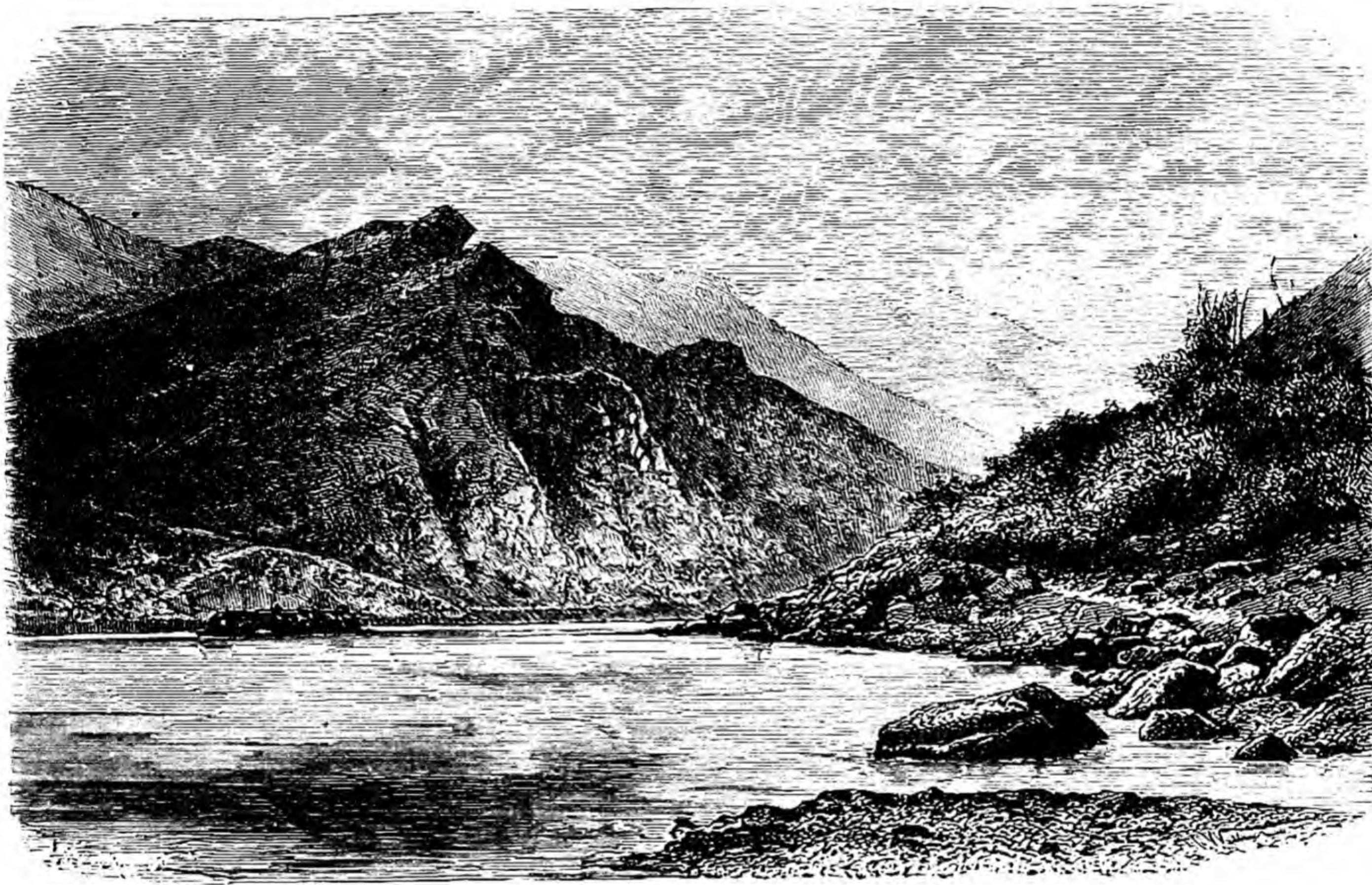


STREET IN HONG KONG.

"institutions" which Englishmen love so dearly, in addition to a few peculiar to the East and to itself. The Chinese quarter is built quite apart from the English one, and though the streets are wide and comparatively airy, it is as dirty, and to English ideas as un-



comfortable, as a Chinese town almost invariably is. In addition to the tolerably well-to-do population who live in houses, there are thousands who are born, reside, follow their business, and die in the sampans, or family boats, which cover the harbour of Hong Kong, as they do those of most other towns of China. The children are stowed away in a space where one can scarcely imagine it possible for an infant to survive. And as a matter of fact they do not always escape violent death. The mother rows with a child strapped on her back, and at the age of two or three the other begins to learn the simple art by which they are destined to earn their bread. Some little care is taken of the boys, for a gourd is tied round their necks, so that if they accidentally fall overboard they may have a chance to float, but the girls are allowed to take their chance, one or two less in a sampan family



THE RAPIDS OF THE CHU-KIANG, CANTON, OR PEARL RIVER.

being considered no loss to the others. Yet, notwithstanding the beauty of the scenery and picturesqueness of the villas and the Government House perched along the steep sides of Victoria Peak, surmounted by the signalling apparatus, Hong Kong is said to be far from healthy. The sea breeze, which ought to cool the town, is shut out by the high peak that gives the island so pleasant an appearance; and as the place is so hot in summer, invalids, in spite of sanitary precautions, are disagreeably frequent from the Hong Kong station. Add to this the occasional prevalence of typhoons, which sweep along with such fury that granite pillars and iron bars snap as if they were glass rods, and it will be seen that to make money in Hong Kong is not unattended with drawbacks. Yet money must be made. The fine cathedral, Government House, clubs, and public buildings, would not alone keep an eager Anglo-Saxon population together, and the best proof of all that Hong Kong is a place where coin can be picked up is supplied by the swarms of Chinese who have flocked to it during the last thirty years, and built that remarkable town of



theirs which "skirts the bay and scrambles upwards and onwards over the hill behind." Victoria, or Hong Kong, as it is universally called in ordinary converse, is, though not a moral town, a comparatively quiet one. There are already, among the one hundred and seventy thousand Celestials on the island, forty-five thousand of British birth. A disorderly Chinaman is uncommon, and a lazy one is equally hard to find. He is rarely out of employment, for he will turn his hand to anything: hence beggars are seldom met with in the streets; hence, also, unhappily, among their other industries, that of picking pockets is included. In this pursuit they are very adroit, and in the allied art of asking half as much again for anything than they intend taking they are perhaps equally skilled and unprincipled. "The houses and shops are most curiously constructed, and just as strangely fitted up; not one, however small or poor, but has its domestic altar, its joss, and other quaint and curious arrangements known only to these peculiarly strange people. Look where you will there are evidences of the customary industry and enterprise of the surprising sons of Shem. Up every alley and in every street we see crowds of little yellow faces, and stumble against brokers or merchants hurrying on to their business, clad in the universal blue jean jumper and trowsers, cotton socks, and shoes of worked silk with thick wooden soles; some with and others without hats; the shaven face and pigtail so typifying the class, that to note a difference between Sun Shing or Wang Heng is sometimes most embarrassing. The dress of the women differs little from that of the men. The curious, built-up style the married ladies have of wearing their hair gives them a strange appearance; while the younger lasses allow theirs to hang down their backs in tresses, or wear it bound tightly over their foreheads, and secured *au chignon*. Their cheeks are tinted bright pink, and with their neat little feet and clean and loose clothing they make a very pretty picture. Although great numbers of other nationalities are to be seen, the Chinese are most conspicuous and interesting to the stranger; and when once the business of the day has begun, the din and traffic are enormous, for crowds of men of all creeds and colours—Jew, Pagan and Christian, Buddhist and Parsee, Chinese, Japanese and European—fill the streets, while gangs of coolies chant to keep step, as they press on beneath their heavy burdens. The merchants, whose places of business lie along the Queen's Road, are so similar in appearance that a description of one will apply to all. He is generally a fat round-faced man, with an important and business-like look, wearing the same style of clothing as the meanest coolie—but of finer material—and is always clean and neat; his long tail, tipped with red or blue silk, hanging down to his heels." Lest the reader may, after reading the graphic description of Mr. Spry, imagine that Hong Kong is a model town, it may be as well to remark that though the Europeans are no worse than their neighbours, and rather more sociable than Europeans usually are—nearly everybody in the community knowing each other, and to some degree being "in the same boat," they are not so addicted to that "snobbery" which in the East is the prevailing vice of our esteemed countrymen—the Chinese are even worse in some respects than when under their own rulers. They are certainly not idle—the Government sees to that—but many of them are roguish to a degree that is embarrassing to the Hong Kong jailer, whose duty it is to find house-room for them. The freedom and protection afforded to all nationalities by our laws attracted to the colony the scum of the neighbouring Chinese towns, and though



many of these ruffians have become reformed characters, a good many of them still give active employment to the police. Gambling-houses and music-halls—with other even more questionable resorts—are common; and though the Government tries, by licensing vices which it is impossible to suppress, to get the vicious elements under its control, it does not always succeed, partly owing to the prevalence of the evil, and partially also no doubt owing to the inefficiency of the police and the temptation which they meet with—but do not always shun—to accept bribes. At one time the Government licensed the gambling-houses, and drew a revenue of 14,000 dollars a month from them; but though the system was productive not only of a large increase to the Colonial income, but of an improvement in the morals at once of the police and their charges, public opinion, which even in Hong Kong is not without a vague, arbitrary kind of conscience, was against it, and the plan was abandoned, though from what we can learn the vice has not gone with it.

The town—both British and Chinese quarters—swarms also with low dens kept by English and Chinese, frequented by the seamen in port, and the *habitués* of which give endless trouble to the police and the police magistrate. That Hong Kong contains in its midst even yet some of the elements which in pre-Britannic times gave it a piratical reputation, is demonstrated by the fact that in the year 1874 a number of pirates shipped as passengers on board the steamer going up the Canton River, and at a convenient opportunity rose and captured it, murdering the officers and some of the passengers, and after ransacking it of what they wanted, ran it ashore not far from Macao. Since then the Chinese passengers of the lowest class are carefully secured within a padlocked enclosure, guarded by a sentry, and in the cabin are several stands of arms, so that, if need be, the more respectable passengers can be armed against the possible pirates. Like every other place on the face of the earth where there is anything worth preying on, Hong Kong is periodically visited by adventurers of all nations. But, as might be expected, the people are shrewd enough to amuse themselves with such specious characters, and if they do not recommend them to the attention of the police, usually send them on their way—not rejoicing. There are, in Hong Kong, specimens of almost every commercial people on the face of the earth, but the English and Americans are the chief merchants. Living need not be dear, for nearly all necessities are about the same price as at home, but the habits of the residents make it so. Large numbers of servants are requisite, either for comfort or because conventionality demands it; and the ideas of the people having been formed on a scale graduated when money was more abundant than it is now, it is found that to live in Hong Kong takes an income about twice what it would in England. The English are especially noted for their extravagance in housekeeping. Even the “junior messes” in their mercantile establishments are the wonder of the fresh arrivals. The assistants are lodged and maintained in the most luxurious fashion, though now nothing compared with what they were before competition became too brisk to allow of waste, and hence a long residence in Hong Kong is not calculated to promote that thrift, or even regularity of habits, essential to the complete British merchant, however much the talk and habits of these bachelor establishments may enable the novice to acquire sound notions on the subjects of wines and cuisine. Next to the English and Americans come the Germans as commercial claimants for the trade of the



port. They are usually better educated than the English. They speak two or three languages, are keener, less extravagant, and conduct their establishments with more regard to economy than do the English. Hence they are rather sneered at, though it is just possible that in commercial transactions the Teutons stoop to artifices which the English scorn to practice. But their competition has resulted in the reduction of the English establishments, for it was found that if the latter were to keep the lead which they had obtained they could do so no longer with the old habits, which were entirely unsuited for hard times, when money is no longer almost thrown at the merchant, but has to be laboriously struggled for with new and eager rivals, whose ideas are the ideas of the era of telegraphs and steamers, and who care nothing for the traditions of the good old times,



CHINESE CART.

over which at Hong Kong, as at Shanghai, the ancients grieve with what is doubtless an unaffected sadness. Hong Kong is, however, still a most hospitable colony. He must be a very unobtrusive visitor indeed who does not learn this fact, and the "cheese-paring," about which the old residents talk so much, has not yet extended so far that an Englishman is ever left in Victoria city in want.

The climate is a sore point with the Hong Kongers, and indeed, if all the tales told are true, there is more in the request to "go to Hong Kong" than would at first sight appear in that contemptuous ejaculation. Its evil reputation we have already noted. For six months in the year the island enjoys dry and rainless weather, but when the heat and the wet come together "the sky seems to descend and rest like a sponge on the hill," which in itself would be a matter of no great consequence. But as always happens, the sponge is squeezed, and the contents descend in torrents which wash the streets, and as soon as the sun rises envelop the town and island in a hot unhealthy vapour. Then





STREET IN HONG KONG.

all the little world of Hong Kong becomes limp, and damp, and mouldy, with scarcely energy enough left to languidly weary for the dry weather and the sea breezes, which for half the year Victoria Peak so jealously keeps out.\*

\* Thomson: "Straits of Malacca," p. 203. Mr. Thomson's account of Hong Kong is acknowledged to be one of the best extant, but, contrary to the almost universal opinion, he considers the island "one of the healthiest stations on the coast of China." The last words may be a saving clause, for the "coast of China" is not healthy. Yet, even with this qualification, naval officers will not altogether agree with this excellent writer and observer. See *The Times*, August 9th, 1883, and August 20th, 1884.



## COREA.

From Hong Kong to Corea is a long voyage, for the little island lies at one end of China and the Peninsula at the other extremity of the coast. But the voyage is even a greater one politically than it is physically. To Hong Kong all the world is invited to buy and sell; from Corea all the world was, until lately, as jealously shut out as it was a few years ago from Japan. "Chosön," as the country is called by the natives, was known to China from a very early period, though it was not until about the eleventh century that the scattered states of which it was originally composed became welded into one monarchy, which has always remained an integral part of the Chinese Empire—Mongol or Tartar. The Japanese, however, have had something to say in the affairs of the Peninsula; for, irritated by the aggressive character of the Coreans, they invaded the country and for a time occupied great part of it. Indeed, up to the year 1790, the Corean king was compelled to send an embassy to Japan to announce his accession; but beyond the fact that annually a mission bearing tribute is sent to Peking, the Coreans have remained almost unknown to the world, and maintain a state of complete isolation from any other people. Towards the close of last century the Roman Catholic missionaries managed to get a footing in the Peninsula, and made some progress among the Buddhists, but in 1866 the last of the priests were either assassinated or compelled to escape by aid of their converts from the country. Corea was not, however, to be allowed to enjoy that happy existence which, according to Montaigne, consists in being *ennuyé*—forgetting the world, and by the world forgotten. The murder of some of the French missionaries brought on the scene Admiral Roze, who in 1866 destroyed the town of Kanghoa, with its military establishments, but his exertions were fruitless in obtaining any concessions as to trade or foreign intercourse. As little effectual—among other attempts—was the expedition of the United States' Admiral Rodgers, in 1870. He forced his way up the River Hang-Kiang to Haniang, Seoul, or Seyool, the capital; but beyond the fact that he expended much gunpowder, and forced the Coreans to do the same, the Admiral returned as he had arrived. The Japanese were, however, more successful. The eloquence of their envoys—aided by the possible eloquence of their ironclads—succeeded in opening the ports—Fusan, Jenchuan, and Yuensan—to the traders of Nippon, in gaining permission for a Japanese envoy to permanently reside at the capital, and among other minor advantages for Japanese vessels to enter Corean ports when in distress. In 1882—six years later—a treaty regarding trade and frontier regulations was concluded with China and the United States; in 1883 one was entered into with Germany and Great Britain, and in 1884 with Italy, but not without serious internal troubles amounting to a revolution. The independence of the country is, however, recognised, though under a shadowy suzerainty to China. The inhabitants of Jenchuan are noted for their familiarity with business matters. A proof of the importance of the place may be found in the fact that the natives have conferred the name of *Jensantsu* upon a certain fish in great demand in the country, because it appears that the price of the commodity can only be established by that of the town market. Something analogous was formerly the case with all kinds of merchandise in Japan, where



everything had, nominally, to pass through the marts at Osaka. Of late years, however, Jenchuan has received a check in its activity from the rivalry of the neighbouring city of Basan, a circumstance which at first induced the belief that the Japanese Government had asked for the opening of the latter port. But as Jenchuan is only twenty "ri"—that is, forty-five miles—distant from Fusan, the decision has been arrived at, with justice, that it would not be advisable to have two commercial factories in such close proximity to each other. Another reason for the preference shown to the site selected is that it contains more than 2,000 houses, and it is hoped that when the Japanese concession and the works of the new harbour are terminated, the town will more than regain its former consequence, and overtake, in the extent of its trade, both Fusan and Basan. Now that all arrangements are completed on the east coast, the Japanese Government is having a survey made along the peninsular shores of the Yellow Sea, with the object of making choice of a western port, the authorities at Haniang having by treaty consented to allow a settlement there also. The vicinity of a village called Saibutsu would be admirably adapted for the purpose, although there is only a population of about 100 souls. The Koreans deem it their best strategic position in that part of the territory. It is near a famous castle named Eisojo, and a large fortress has been erected hard by.\* These concessions constitute the thin edge of the wedge, which cannot fail eventually to open up Corea to the commerce of the world, much to the material welfare of the people, though possibly not quite so much to their moral advancement.

We really know very little about this mysterious peninsula, except that it is about three and a quarter times larger than Scotland, and is so mountainous that a French missionary has compared its surface to the sea under the influence of a gale of wind. The highest peaks, however, do not exceed 9,000 feet, and most of them are much lower; but there is no part of the country so flat that it can be styled a plain. The coast line is not very irregular, being broken into bays and harbours only here and there. The eastern shore presents to the voyager along it the appearance of steep cliffs, here and there declining into sandy dunes, but the south and west coasts are more irregular, and guarded by a number of small islands, the largest of which is Quelpaert, forty-six miles long; but the Port Hamilton group contain a good harbour, and in 1886 and part of 1887 were occupied by England, but were voluntarily abandoned. The country is also intersected by a number of rivers, some of them navigable for large vessels. The climate, on the whole, is more equable, owing to the south-west monsoon, than that of the continental portion of North China, but is subject to extremes of cold in winter and heat in summer, and is, moreover, very wet. It produces most of the fruits of Europe indifferently well; and in addition gives good returns of tobacco, rice, wheat, rye, millet, cotton, hemp, and ginseng.\* The potato also grows very well; but the Government having interdicted its use, it is now only growing surreptitiously in some of the outlying districts, though its general cultivation would add greatly to the welfare of the population. Coal is abundant, but little used, while the working of gold, silver, and copper—also

\* The "Osaka Nippon," quoted in the *Tokio Times*, November 1st, 1879.

† The root of an araliaceous plant (*Panax ginseng*) in great demand in China as a medicine in fevers. Its proper name is "Jin-san."



plentiful—is prohibited under severe laws. Sheep and goats succeed excellently, but the king has alone the right of rearing them, and even then their use is restricted to sacrificial purposes. The dog is considered a more dainty article of diet, and in addition, cattle and pigs are eaten. Small but strong horses are plentiful, and the usual wild animals of North China are found in moderate abundance in the less settled districts. The eight provinces into which the kingdom is divided contain many walled cities, but none of them of any magnificence. The king, though a nominal vassal of China, reigns as an absolute monarch, and in his prerogative and the divinity by which he is hedged, is considered even more sacred a personage than his suzerain. The king rules, aided by nine ministers and a number of judges, and each province is presided over by a governor. But the nobility have obtained inordinate privileges, and in reality oppose the people on one side, and encroach on the royal prerogative on the other. The army consists of all persons capable of bearing arms—the nobles excepted—and, theoretically at least, every office of state is open to any person who can, under the Chinese system of competitive examination, attain the necessary degree; but corruption universally prevails, in spite of the existence of a class of officials corresponding to the Chinese “censors” (p. 51), whose duty it is to privately supervise the acts of the higher dignitaries in the provinces. Though polygamy is not permitted, concubinage is, and women hold a very low rank in the domestic life of Corea. Filial piety is, however, carried to an extreme even unknown in China, and the ties of blood are recognised in a manner which would shame the proverbial “fortieth cousin” of the Scottish Highlands.

The people, who are said to number about ten and a half millions, are nevertheless miserably poor, and their houses and dress bear witness to their impecuniosity. There is little trade in the country, but it is increasing. The Japanese and other foreign goods imported at Fusan did not, during any year from 1876 to 1878, amount to more than half a million dollars in value. But during 1878–79 Corean products to the value of over £90,000 were brought to Japan. These consisted for the most part of rice, white beans, hides, gold dust, “irico,” poque silk, and bones. The imports for Japan were valued at £75,000, and consisted of shirtings, lawns, T-cloth, copper slabs, and cotton yarn. Of the imports, however, less than £11,000 worth were Japanese products. In 1885 the total imports were valued at 1,691,600 dollars, and the exports at 388,023 dollars.\* The roads are miserable, and consequently wheeled carriages are not in use (p. 69). At the markets or fairs most of the commercial intercourse of the people is carried on, but as each peasant usually supplies himself with all his needs, there is not a great prospect of wealth to be derived from Corea, at least until permission to open up the mines is accorded to foreigners. Paper is one of the few articles in the manufacture of which they excel, and as the Japanese use paper for almost every purpose in life, food excepted, there may spring up a brisk intercourse between them and the Coreans in this staple. They are skilled workers in metal, and in Eastern Asia Corean sabres and poniards bear much the same reputation as Damascus blades once did in the West. But at present nearly all transactions must be effected by barter, for, with the exception of a few small copper coins, there is no medium of exchange in use. Finally, when we add that anything worthy the name of a bridge is unknown except in the capital,

\* “Reports of Embassy and Legation,” and “Consular Reports” for 1887.



the backward state of the country, compared with China and Japan even when first opened to Europeans, may be imagined. The Japanese are, however, not likely to leave many stones unturned in order to effect a profitable intercourse with their neighbours. It may nevertheless be taken for granted that the Koreans will do all they can, both from their own inclinations and by the instigation of the Chinese, to limit this as far as possible. Even at present the Chinese and Japanese junks, which fish trepang and herrings off the coast,



COREAN PALANQUIN.

are not allowed to land their crews or cargoes, or to hold any intercourse with the people. There are, however, 2,500 Japanese, 200 Chinese, and about 100 Europeans in the country.

As in China, education is held in high esteem in Corea, and is ostensibly the only means of entering the Government service; but the higher class greatly neglect their own language, preferring to use, both in conversation and writing, the Chinese tongue; and even the shopkeepers employ it on their sign-boards and announcements. The result is that the once extensive literature of Corea has dwindled down to insignificant proportions, and the purity of the native language is now merely preserved by translations



of Chinese works, a few poetical collections, romances, and less important treatises. When Admiral Roze captured the capital, he found carefully preserved in one of the buildings a library of upwards of four thousand books, bound in green and crimson silk. One volume, evidently highly valued, consisted of a series of marble tablets united by copper-gilt hinges. Each tablet was embedded in a cushion of scarlet silk, and the letters were of encrusted gold. The native language is of the so-called "Turanian" family, but it is now much mingled with Chinese words, which, however, are made to undergo the regular Korean declension.\*

The religion of the country has also undergone a metamorphosis at the hands of the Chinese. At one time it was Buddhism, but since the introduction of the doctrines of Confucius, in the fourteenth century, they have been gradually displacing the older faith, until at the present time they are almost universally adopted, though with the admixture of various indigenous superstitions, from which the purer form of worship practised in China is exempt. The educated classes have even further advanced, until their religion mainly consists in the worship of ancestors, with the attendant ceremonies connected with births, deaths, funerals, and mourning. Soothsayers are, however, held in high repute, and as blind men are supposed to have prophetic power, the sightless people of the country have formed themselves into a regular professional guild, whose services are greatly in demand, to use Mr. Webster's words, "for the discovery of secrets, the foretelling of the future, and the exorcising of devils. In this latter operation they trust principally to noise as a means of frightening the spirits, whom they ultimately catch in a bottle and carry off in triumph." The Koreans, as both the Americans and the French learned to their cost, are no despicable enemies. Their cannon were found to be well-finished breech-loaders, and though their boats and junks are fastened together without a metal nail, they are very fair specimens of Oriental vessels. At the present time a great deal of illicit trade goes on between the Chinese and the Koreans at the palisade-gate, and other places on the frontier, and much Manchester cotton finds its way into the country. Indeed, the Koreans themselves declare that at one time they imported thirty thousand pieces of foreign manufactures yearly, and as they cannot possibly produce goods as cheaply as we can sell them to their planters in exchange for raw material, there may in time be a chance of opening up a trade with this exclusive people, their exclusiveness, however, partaking the nature rather of an artificial restriction put on them by their rulers than of any desire on their side to keep apart from the world.

Their mines are undoubtedly rich, and their other products quite equal to those of China and Japan. Their cotton is, indeed, not much inferior to that of the Carolinas, and would doubtless command a ready market. One of their chief articles of trade with the Chinese would, however, experience a less eager demand. This is human hair, the abundance of which is accounted for by a curious Korean custom. The boys' hair is allowed to grow until it can be divided in the middle and the hind portion plaited into a "tail." At marriage the tail is cut off and sold to the Chinese.

On the borders of Corea and China, safe from either in their mountain fastness, live a peculiar semi-savage Mantchu race, who employ themselves in collecting medicinal roots and

\* Medhurst: "A Translation of a Comparative Vocabulary of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese" (1835).



in cutting down trees, which they float down the rivers to the Ya-lei-kiang, in the valley of which some of them also live. They appear, likewise, to find gold in abundance, for they invariably pay the balance in their dealings with the Chinese and Koreans in that metal.\*

### MANTCHURIA.

The founders of the present or "Tsing" dynasty of Chinese rulers—who ascended the throne in 1644—were originally chiefs of the Mantchu Tartars—semi-savage nomads who roamed in the country north and east of China. This region of Mantchuria is still a part of the Chinese empire, and, owing to its being the natal country of the emperors, is especially favoured by them. It is divided into three provinces, though one of these—viz., Southern Mantchuria, or Shinking—is almost a part of China proper, and in our notice of that part of the empire has been briefly touched upon (p. 40). Central Mantchuria, known as Kirin, or Tchilin, is less incorporated, while Ho-lung-chiang, or Northern Mantchuria, is the Chinese part of the Amoor country, the greater part of which we have seen (pp. 6–10) has been absorbed by Russia. These regions are usually known as Tung-san-shêng—the "three eastern provinces." The first-named division, also sometimes called Liao-tung, having been already noticed, may in this brief sketch be dismissed. Kirin, or Central Mantchuria, is usually represented on the map as being bounded for some distance on the west by a palisade or stake defence. This is, however, something very different from the famous great wall which was built across the provinces of Pe-chili and Shanse to keep out the Tartars, and which still, in greater or less integrity, remains. In truth, "the barrier of stakes," which is portrayed with such circumstantiality on all the maps of China, exists merely in the imagination of the Emperor and the cartographers. There is, according to the report of Mr. Williamson, only "a sort of gate at the passes, and a ditch or shadow of a fence for a few yards on either side." The whole area of the country may be estimated at 135,000 square miles, and like Southern Mantchuria may be divided into two portions—one prairie and the other mountainous—the first being, however, only a small area compared to the north-east corner "within the link of the Soongari" river. The mountain region is very fine, some of the peaks rising to the height of 8,000 feet, though the supposed perpetual snow described as lying on the mountains is really layers of pumice-stone. In the middle of the plains may be seen conical peaks, isolated from every range, and appearing at a distance "like a number of dish-covers on a large dining-table." Through its course the Soongari, Hurka, and Usuri, which eventually find their way into the Amoor. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the first should not be considered the continuation proper of that river. Central and Northern Mantchuria may thus be considered "one huge basin, corrugated by several mountain ranges, with their respective streams, the mouth of the basin

\* Williamson: "Journeys in North China," Vol. II., p. 303. Korea is known to the natives as Chosön (Tso-sjön); to the Chinese as Kaoli, and to the Japanese as Korai, hence our name of Korea. It is one of the least known countries in the world. The principal authorities on it are the "Consular Reports," Griffis' "Korea" (1882), Lowell's "Chosön" (1886), and Dallet's "L'Eglise de la Corée" (1874); Oppert: "A Forbidden Land" (1880).



lying towards the north-east." The extremes of climate are more marked than in Southern Mantchuria, but as the shortness of the summer season is compensated for by the rapidity of the growth and maturity of the crops, the weather does not interfere with agriculture. Mr. Williamson, from whom we derive most of our knowledge of this part of China, describes the country from Pet-tu-na eastward as a level plain, only broken by insignificant undulations, and covered for the most part with a waving sea of tall grass, varied by a

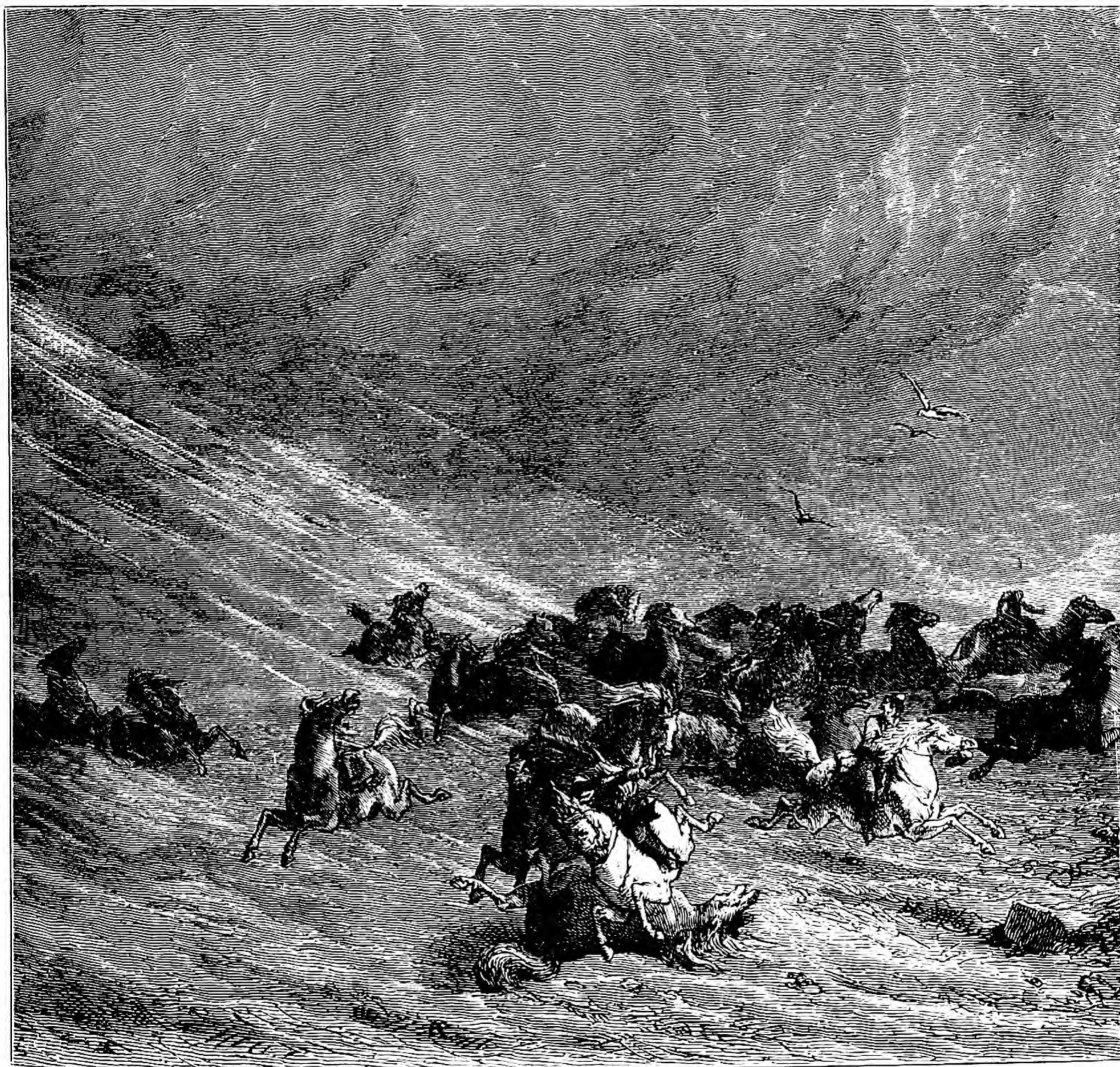


MONGOL KALKHAS.

little brushwood, a few trees, and cultivated patches in the vicinity of hamlets. The monotony of the prevailing scenery is, however, more than compensated for by the variety, beauty, and frequent boldness of the mountain districts, and the ever-changing aspects of the hills and valleys, woods and streams, and the extreme luxuriance of the temperate vegetation. The contrast between this region and Shan-tung, further south, is remarkable. In the latter province (p. 33) the tops of the hills are bald: in this part of Mantchuria they are as green as in Scotland, and in places cultivated to the summit. On the tops of every high ridge are found oaks, elms, and willows of such huge size that they look as luxuriantly clothed as some of the islands in the Indian archipelago. Here the



severe winter frosts freeze the moisture in the soil, so that when the summer heats come with all their force the vegetation is supplied with abundance of water. In the regions further south the contrary prevails. In Shan-tung there is little frost, and accordingly the rain which falls on the soil is evaporated rapidly, leaving little for plant life



SANDSTORM IN MONGOLIAN DESERT.

at the period when it most requires it. Socially, Mantchuria is really only an extension of China, for the greater portion of the inhabitants are emigrants from the northern provinces. They get land at nominal prices, and their industry not being left behind in the land of their birth, they are gradually converting waste lands into rich farms, and are likely in course of time, owing to the better climate and the more abundant supply of food, to turn out a finer race than their relatives in China proper. There is, however, such an



enormous tract of country to be settled that it will be ages before much impression can be made on it, and under good government it ought to attract much of that immigration which is flowing into foreign countries.

In addition to the Chinese, there are a considerable number of Mohammedans settled in Mantchuria. They are the proprietors of many of the best restaurants in the towns, and their lodging-houses for the traveller are usually kept much more cleanly than those of the Sinetic infidel. Their religion also keeps them apart, physically and socially, from the Chinese, but to foreigners they are well disposed. The Mantchus, curiously enough, are now in a minority, and so rapidly has the process of amalgamation been going on that there is at this day some difficulty in distinguishing between them and the Chinese. In the Central province they are for the most part agriculturists, and in dress, manners, customs, and language are Mantchu no longer. They are, indeed, gradually dropping their own tongue, and it is only the youths, who from their position or prospects are expected to cultivate the ancient language, who take the trouble to go to the Mantchu schools established in some of the larger towns. Nomad Mantchus are few; indeed, Mr. Williamson in all his journeys met none, and is inclined to think that their nomadic propensities have died out. Even the soldiers drafted from Northern Mantchuria, though wilder in appearance than their brethren from the south, are, when at home, agriculturists. Yet there is plenty of room for vagabond propensities did these exist, for the land is great and the population small.

Most of the settlements are along the lines of travel, but away from these the country is thinly dotted with farms and villages. Altogether, Mr. Williamson calculated in the year 1870 the population of Central Mantchuria at about 2,000,000, and the official statistics, or rather estimates, for the three provinces put it at 12,000,000. Of the cities, Kirin Oula is one of the finest, and perhaps one of the most beautifully situated in China. Built on the banks of the majestic Soongari, at the foot of a range of hills which form about three-fourths of a circle around it, it could not be better placed as regards picturesqueness. But the narrow, unflagged streets, and the low-roofed, poor houses, stamp it as a town of third-rate rank architecturally. Many of the squares are, however, tastefully ornamented, and some of the streets are paved with blocks of wood. Its chief commerce consists in the building of junks and boats, for which industry the abundant supply of wood gives it great facilities. The country is, as a rule, fertile, the soil being over large tracts a deep fat loam, apparently formed by the decay of vegetation, so that after the brushwood and trees—where these are found—are cleared off, little labour is needed to secure good crops. Pulse is the chief crop. Maize is also cultivated extensively, and the surplus wasted in distilling a kind of whisky; but wheat, barley, and potatoes, though grown to some extent, are not highly appreciated. Another crop, which has only been introduced within the last few years, is now attaining ominous and alarming properties. This is opium, now considered the most profitable occupant of the soil; and though illegal, its growth here, as in other parts of the empire, is winked at by the corrupt mandarins. Its effect, not only on the parts of the country into which it is sent, but on the growers themselves, is described as being impossible to exaggerate. Men and women are becoming almost universally



addicted to smoking it, and once the habit is begun there seems almost no cure for it. Indigo is also a profitable crop, and Manchurian tobacco is famous all over China. Indeed, the spread of tobacco culture over the empire, as well as its use by all classes, is very remarkable. Tobacco is believed, on what grounds I have not been able to learn, to have been introduced into Japan by the Dutch. The Japanese acted as the agents in bringing the herb over to Corea about 290 years ago. The Coreans, in their turn, made the Manchus acquainted with it, and when the latter conquered China they brought into the Middle Kingdom the drug which is now smoked by probably every man and boy in the empire. Coal has been found in the province, and it is probable that agates, cornelians, onyxes, and other precious stones are not the only mineral riches of the country, though as yet neither iron nor coal have been worked, nor indeed are they known to exist in any great quantities, though abundant in the surrounding country.

Tigers of the Bengal species are common, and often commit considerable depredations on the flocks, and even carry off human beings. Bears, polecats, weasels, foxes, sables, wolves, wild boars, stags, antelopes, rabbits, hares, &c., abound; and horses, mules, asses, oxen, sheep, dogs, cats, and pigs—especially in the vicinity of the large maize distilleries—are common everywhere in the settlements. Trout, carp, perch, pike, eels, and salmon are plentiful in the rivers. The last named, indeed, is a common article of food among the natives, while their skins are prepared for summer clothing, and if properly dressed look very pretty. Snakes and other reptiles are too common, and the insect swarms which fill the air are among the worst disagreeables of travel here, as well as along the valley of the Amoor further north and east.

Northern Manchuria, Ho-lung-chiang, or Tsi-tsi-har, is a much less inviting country, and more thinly populated, though its area is 199,000 square miles. The only cultivated regions appear to be in the valley of the Nonni and along the banks of the Soongari. In the former district are situated the cities of Tsi-tsi-har (or Pu-kwhe) and Mergen, and in the latter the smaller town of Hu-lan, in addition to several villages. The other parts, though fine, are either covered with forests and not likely to be soon reclaimed, or left almost entirely in a state of nature, even when consisting of fine open valleys such as those we described in a former chapter (p. 8). In time the country may be settled up, for the soil is rich, and the cattle which in places dot the prairies afford evidences of the excellent pastures in which they wallow. Otherwise the remarks already made about Central Manchuria may be said to apply generally to this part of the imperial "natal land." The region is well fitted for receiving the surplus population of China, especially of North China, but it is doubtful whether they will ever be able to people it rapidly enough, for the Russians are anxious to colonise their part of the valley of the Amoor, and though their success has not hitherto been great, any misfortune to the Chinese empire might be the signal for Slav civilisation to find its way further east, until the whole of Northern Manchuria, and even of the Central part of the country, met the fate of the greater part of the Amoor Valley. The Manchus and the Mongols are sometimes confounded. In reality they are of different habits, though, in common with the Coreans, and perhaps the Tungoose, Goldi, Giliaks (p. 7), Manguns, the Orokaps of Saghalin (Vol. IV., p. 319), and the Japanese, of one stock. But while the Mongols—as



has been very clearly explained by Mr. Meadows\*—east on the great plains of Asia were compelled to be nomadic, the Mantchus, more highly favoured, had in Mantchuria proper†



MONGOL'S CAMEL ON THE MARCH.

a land of mountains and fertile valleys, and so lived by hunting, fishing, and agriculture.

\* See also, *passim*, Mr. Howorth's exhaustive "History of the Mongols" (1877—80).

† The present Mantchuria comprehends some country which, though beyond the great wall, and often politically separated from China, has from the earliest times been settled by Chinese agriculturists, traders, and artisans.



The Mantchus have always been a settled people. In ancient times they dwelt during the winter in caves excavated in the sides of dry banks, or in pits in the earth; and in summer in huts formed of boughs, covered with bark or with long wild grass. From the earliest periods they have reared horses and oxen, but, unlike the Mongols, they have never had camels and sheep. On the other hand, they have been greater breeders of pigs, which fatten on the abundant mast shed by the large forests which cover so much of their country. The Mantchus approximate to Mongols in being hunters, but of a different kind of game, and have, in addition, always derived much of their sustenance from the numerous rivers which intersect their country. The vague term "Tartar" is generally applied to the Mantchus, but if by "Tartar" is to be understood a nomadic race of herdsmen the term is a misnomer, for at the period when a lettered race came in contact with them they presented, according to Mr. Meadows, a close resemblance to the Red Indians of New England and Canada at the date of the discovery of America. They were divided into a number of tribes, but as from time to time one tribe gained the mastery over another, the vanquished tribe dropped its old name in favour of that of the victors, and thus it came to pass that before the Mantchus bore their present designation they were known by various other titles, landmarks of the progress of the conquering and absorbing characteristics of the people to whom they belong. In very early times, the Mantchus paid tribute to China, but growing powerful, and taking advantage of a corresponding weakness on the part of their more civilised neighbours, they began to assume the aggressive, until in 1618 they routed a great army of Chinese and Koreans sent against them. In 1644 the Ming dynasty was entirely displaced by the Tsing "pure," or Mantchu emperors, who to this day reign with undisputed authority. Since that date Mantchus have, as might be expected, really ruled the country, and occupied most offices of profit and trust. But the "Tartar" sway has not been an oppressive one; and while the Mantchus have conquered China, the Chinese have conquered the Tartars, by the victors having almost unconsciously imitated the customs of the vanquished, until at the present moment it is difficult to distinguish the one race from the other, except that the Mantchus are rather lighter in complexion than the Chinese, somewhat heavier built, possess more beard, and as a rule are more intellectual-looking in appearance (p. 72). They are also less under the control of the Buddhist priests than the Mongols, and pay more respect to literature. Take them as a whole, they may be considered the most improvable of all the Chinese people, and possibly present the best raw material on which civilisation and progress can work in Asia.\*

#### MONGOLIA.

The region of the Chinese Empire known under this name is not necessarily the country of the Mongols, for this ethnological term is, like the corresponding one of "Tartar," used very loosely and comprehensively. Indeed, it corresponds in Blumenbach's classification of the human race to the Turanian of later writers, and includes not only

\* Fleming: "Travels on Horseback in Mantchu Tartary" (1863); Gabelentz: "Eléméns de la Grammaire Mandchoue" (1833); and James, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1887), pp. 531—567.



the Mongols proper, but the Chinese, Indo-Chinese, Tibetans, Tartars of many kinds, Siamese, Japanese, Burmese, Eskimo, Samoyedes, Finns, Lapps, Turks, and even Hungarians or Magyars—in fact, a heterogeneous collection of about half of the human race. But though collectively no people have played a more prominent part in the history of the world, the country of Mongolia proper is by no means an important region, nor are the nomadic hordes inhabiting it suggestive of the warrior scourges who, under Attila, crushed the Roman Empire, or under Genghis Khan and his successors formed the greatest empire the world ever saw. Mongolia, as defined by General Strachey, is the almost rainless region sloping in great grassy or stony plains towards the interior of the continent west of the Khingan or Inshan range of mountains. These monotonous tracts weary the eye, and, owing to the scanty pastures interspersed by deserts, are able to support but a thin population—estimated at 200,000—compared with their enormous extent, and that of a nomadic character, ever on the move in search of grass and water for their flocks of sheep and camels, and herds of horned cattle, and horses. In the eastern part of the country the tribes, owing to contact with the Chinese, are approximately civilised, but those in the western part of the region are so cruelly barbarous as to make the country, in spite of the travels of a few adventurous explorers,\* to a great extent a *terra incognita*. In the summer the heat is great, and the winter colds correspondingly severe. Much of it, owing to the little rainfall, is a hard stony desert, with here and there areas of blown sand. Except on the slopes of the higher mountains bordering or intersecting it, on which the rain falls more plentifully, or where the melting snow supplies water for irrigation, there are not many towns or settled villages. In such localities there is a little cultivation and some trees, but beyond these oases all Mongolia presents few spots fitted for the abode of civilised man. The Mongols are very pious, and in each of their circular tents there is almost invariably an image of Buddha. Milk, cheese, and the flesh of their flocks are their usual food, and dried excrement their almost only fuel (pp. 72, 76, 81).

#### THE DESERT OF GOBI.

Shut in by the Yablonnoi Mountains, the Thian-shan, the Tibetan plateau, and the Khingan range—its eastern part almost coterminous with Southern Mongolia, and its western part merging into Eastern Turkestan—lies the great upland desert of Gobi.† It is a plateau of some 1,200,000 square miles, elevated between 2,000 and 6,000 feet above the sea, while there are mountain ridges which traverse this Central Asian wilderness reaching in some parts to 10,000 or 12,000 feet. It is Han-hai, or Dry Sea of the Chinese, a term which Richthofen has proposed to substitute for that ordinarily in use, in so far that it not only is suggestive of its present condition but of its former history. In reality it is the bed of an ancient sea, the shores of which can still be traced with more or less distinctness, and is divided into two great basins. The western of these is intersected by the great Tarim River, which is swollen by tributaries from

\* Prejevalsky: "Travels in Mongolia," translated by E. Delmar Morgan (1876), etc.

† It is the Turki for "great," and, like the term "Shamo," sometimes used as a synonym of "Gobi," is employed by the Chinese as a general term for any sandy desert.





FIRE ON AN ASIATIC STEPPE.



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the surrounding mountains, the course of which is as yet very imperfectly known, and which ends in an inland lake, now very generally believed to be the famous Lob-nor, whose identification has for so many centuries been one of the problems of Central Asiatic geography. General Prejevalsky, to whom of late years almost our sole knowledge of this region is due, describes the country through which the Tarim flows as one of the wildest and most unfertile in all Asia. A sadder desert it would indeed be difficult to imagine. A meagre fringe of tamarisks and reeds lines its shores, while away to the south-west stretch those drifting fields of sand which have immemorially given the country the evil reputation it so deservedly bears. On the banks, where a little moisture enables a scanty vegetation to settle, about 1,200 souls manage, by the rearing of cattle and the cultivation of a little wheat and barley, to exist. The people, who are all Mohammedans—of the Kara Kalmuk, Khoshot, and similar tribes—only came to the Lob country, as the district of the Lower Tarim is called, about 170 years ago. But before these Kalmuk emigrants came there were aborigines in the district about whom very little is known, except that they are small black men, with long matted hair, who shun the society of the new comers, and delight to live with the wild beasts and the cattle in the thickets and brakes about the marshes. Even the villages of the new comers are only a collection of reed huts, and though the people live a little better since agriculture has been introduced among them, they still subsist chiefly on fish, and the produce of their flocks, and the chase. But the Ameer of Kashgar, who during the short-lived era of his kingdom claimed to be their ruler, never could get any tribute out of them, while it is not very likely that the Chinese will be any more successful now than they were in former times. Some of their customs are extremely peculiar, and well worthy the attention of ethnologists, though they are of such a nature as to render these pages not the proper place for introducing them to a non-scientific audience. At one time the population was much more numerous, but more than twenty years ago small-pox destroyed the majority of the inhabitants. The Lake swarms with fish, and its margins at seasons are noisy with wild fowl; and among the reeds the tiger, wolf, fox, wild boar, hare, and other animals prowl, affording abundance of food and sport to the inhabitants, whose thoughts seem never to soar much higher than the material wants of the day. At one time the wild camel was numerous near the Lob-nor, but at present its chief haunt is the desert of Kum-tagh, to the east of the Lake, though specimens are now and then come across in other districts. The eastern, or Shamo basin of the Gobi, is varied by no water-courses, but seems to consist of a series of terraces, giving the country, according to the observations of Mr. Ney Elias, the appearance of low hills or downs, with valleys and plains intervening, the whole of a rocky or stony nature rather than sandy, though patches of sand do occur at intervals. Vegetation is rare, and consists of weeds, scrub, and "heath," with scarcely a blade of grass, "and only a dwarfed and stunted tree here and there in the gorges or passes of these low rocky ranges that at uncertain intervals cross the desert in almost parallel lines from east to west."\*

But it is not this part of the desert which is of the greatest interest—it is the region covered with the shifting sands towards the west, and regarding which for long there have

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLIII. (1873), p. 120; Richthofen: "China," Vol. I. (1877)



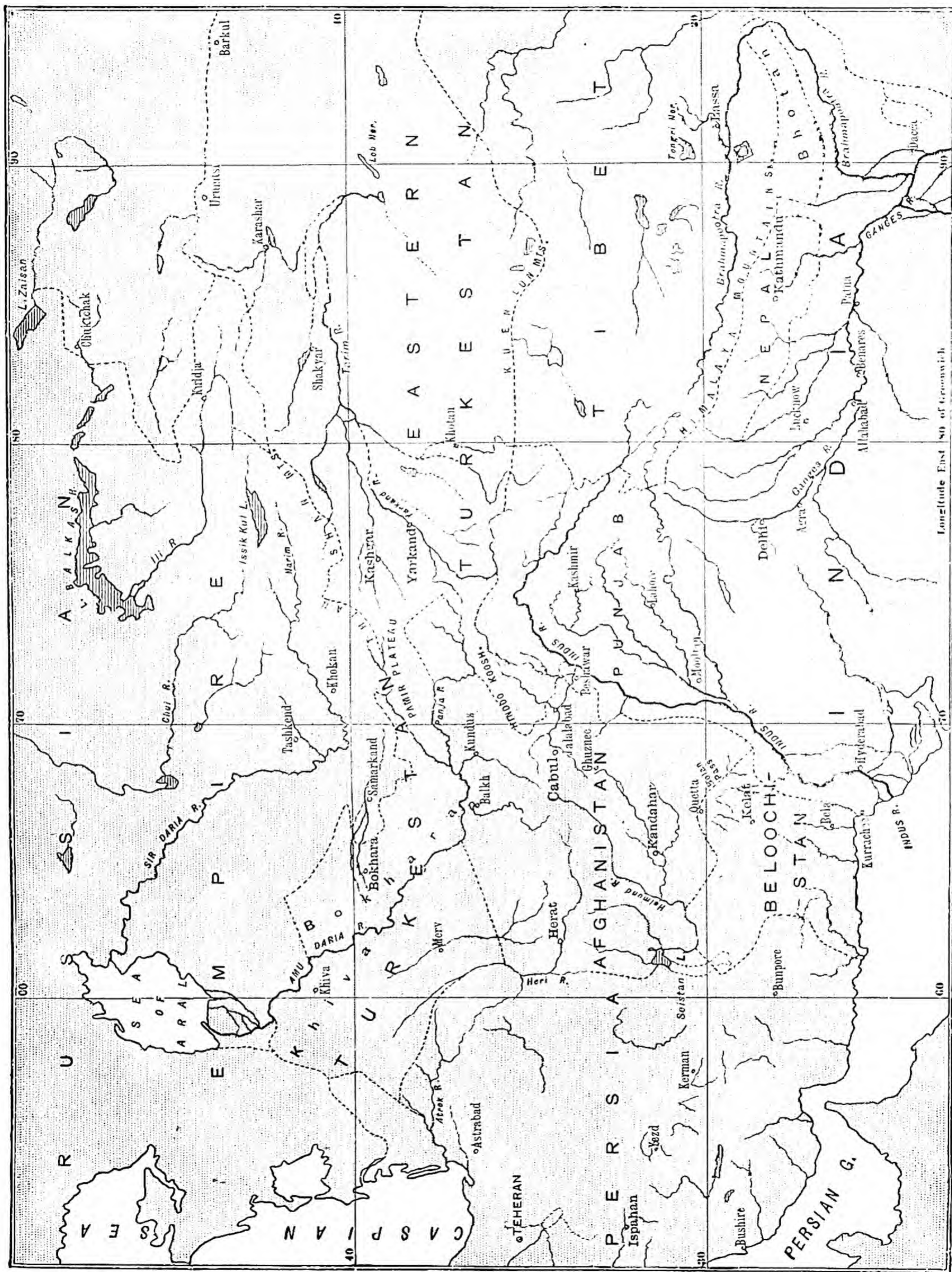
been strange tales. It has been immemorially reported that ages ago there were cities here, and that they are now buried by the sand. Sir Douglas Forsyth, during his mission to Kashgar, made careful inquiry into these stories, and the results of his researches are so



SCENE IN THE DESERT OF GOBI.

curious that it may be well to devote a brief space to some account of the opinion he has arrived at. In the first place, it may be noted that such buried cities are not unknown in other parts of Asia. For instance, in 1865 Mr. Johnson visited an ancient city not far from Kiria, and four marches distant from Khotan, which had been buried in the sands for centuries, and from which gold and silver ornaments, and even a quantity of tea, were dug. When General Prejevalsky crossed the sands of Kugupchi he also heard tales of buried





MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA, ETC.



treasure. This part of the desert is a succession of hillocks, from forty to one hundred feet in height, composed of yellow sand, the upper stratum of which, when disturbed by the wind, blows on either side of the hills, forming loose drifts, which have the appearance of snow-drifts. He describes the appearance of these bare yellow hillocks as being most dreary and depressing. Nothing can be seen but the sky and the sand: not a plant, not an animal is visible, with the single exception of the yellow-grey lizards which trail their bodies over the loose soil, and mark it with the patterns of their tracks. "A dull heaviness oppresses the senses in this inanimate sea of sand. No sounds are heard, not even the chirping of the grasshopper: the silence of the tomb surrounds you" (pp. 73, 80). Such a melancholy scene has conjured up in the Mongol imagination strange tales of warriors who here fought against the Chinese, whose countless slain Allah caused the wind to cover with the desert sand. "To this day the Mongols relate, with superstitious awe, how cries and groans may be heard in the sands of Kugupchi, which proceed from the spirits of the departed; and that every now and then the winds, which stir up the sand, expose to view different treasures, such as silver dishes, which, though conspicuous above the surface, may not be taken away, because death would immediately overtake the bold man who ventured to touch them." Many similar traditions might be quoted of the overwhelming of cities by sand and of the treasures which still remain. Of course, such legends must all be taken with great allowance, but after sifting out of them the evident exaggerations and lies, there remains behind such a residuum of apparent fact that little doubt need be entertained of the existence of several such towns in this part of the country. Sir Douglas Forsyth and Dr. Bellew saw the traces of many in the part of the desert nearest Kashgar, and though they obtained neither gold nor silver, they obtained proof positive that these have been, and are yet found in other ruins, in addition to the coins of the Greek and Roman conquerors, as well as images of Buddha, which refer to a later date. The locality of most of these ruined cities is said to be many marches east of Khotan, but near Ilehi, the chief city of Khotan, remarkable finds of great gold ornaments have been made. Sir Douglas Forsyth is inclined to believe that on the western part of the desert, at all events, the sand mounds are moving on, baring parts now covered, and covering regions now cultivated, and that in this manner the cities and houses which are known to be buried have been from time to time overwhelmed. It is likely that before long we shall learn more of these interesting and mysterious regions from Prejevalsky, whose former explorations are so well known, as well as Count Széchenyi, a Hungarian traveller, both of whom are making strenuous efforts to effect an entrance in this part of Asia, and through it on to Tibet, to which we shall soon proceed.\* The population of Mongolia is about two millions.

#### CHINESE TURKESTAN.

Far away in the centre of Asia (p. 73) lies a region of sandy deserts, relieved by oases of great riches, and peopled by a warlike race, half barbarous, but extremely Moslem,

\* See also Pevtsov's "Expedition in North Western Mongolia," in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1879), p. 701.



whose wars, feuds, and conquests formed an important portion of the world's chronicles in the Middle Ages, and even in the earlier centuries of the Christian era. Then for a time their names almost faded out of history, until recent events once more brought them prominently before the world. The most famous kingdom of this great Mediterranean is Little Bokhara, Kashgar, Eastern Turkestan, or Chinese Tartary, the name it bore for nearly a century and a half, and which title, in the midst of the recent hurly-burly, it is destined to bear once more. For some time prior to the ninth century the Chinese Empire extended to the borders of Kokand and Kashmir; but soon after that date internal dissensions disturbed the country, and the Central Asiatic kingdom fell from the grasp of the distant rulers, who had enough to do to hold their own immediate subjects in check. Then the native princes each grasped what they could, sometimes more, sometimes less; now giving rise to a Genghis Khan or a Timour Leng, who were only prevented by death from conquering half the world; again falling asunder into fragments under the successors of these fierce warrior chiefs, until amid the confused turmoil we come down to the year 1720, when the Chinese began once more to assert their power, and by 1760 had re-conquered the country afterwards known as Eastern Turkestan. Under their rule it continued until the year 1859, when the elements of decay once more began to develop themselves in the Chinese Empire. Rebels had risen up against the Peking authority, and on every hand were successful. The Panthay ruler swayed over the Mohammedans in Yunnan, the Taepings were at the height of their career, and in Kan-su and Shen-si Mussulman insurgents sprang to arms. Under these circumstances the time seemed ripe for the Tungans—semi-independent tribes on the Kashgar border—rising and reclaiming the country for its old masters. The latter called in the aid of Yakoob Beg, a Kokand soldier of fortune, who, however, accomplished his task far too well for the taste of his employers, for not only did he succeed in driving out the Chinese, but by the year 1866 had crushed the Tungans also, and established himself ruler of a Mohammedan state whose capital was Kashgar. Here, as Athalik Ghazi, Champion of the Faith, and Badaulet, the Well-beloved, he reigned up to the year 1877, when the Chinese, having settled affairs at home, began to once more bestir themselves in Central Asia. If their fall had been rapid their recovery in that region was even swifter. In the very first battle in which they encountered Yakoob he was defeated. Then immediately the mushroom kingdom seemed to slip from his grasp; city after city surrendered or was taken, tribe after tribe deserted him. Worst of all, the soldier king died himself, and after a brief but ineffectual stand by his sons and generals, the latter fled over the border into Russian territory, and the Chinese were, after the brief interregnum, once more masters of Eastern Turkestan.

Such, in a few words, is a brief outline of the events which have led to this part of the world appearing under the head of the outlying parts of the great empire whose capital is in Peking rather than—as would have been the case if these pages had been written a few years sooner—as an independent state.\* Since the Chinese have become masters they have ruled with a rod of iron. Every relative or adherent of the Athalik Ghazi has been punished with a ruthlessness which only the

\* The fullest history of Kashgar is contained in Mr. D. C. Boulger's "Life of Yakoob Beg" (1878), from which able work many of the facts in this sketch are derived.



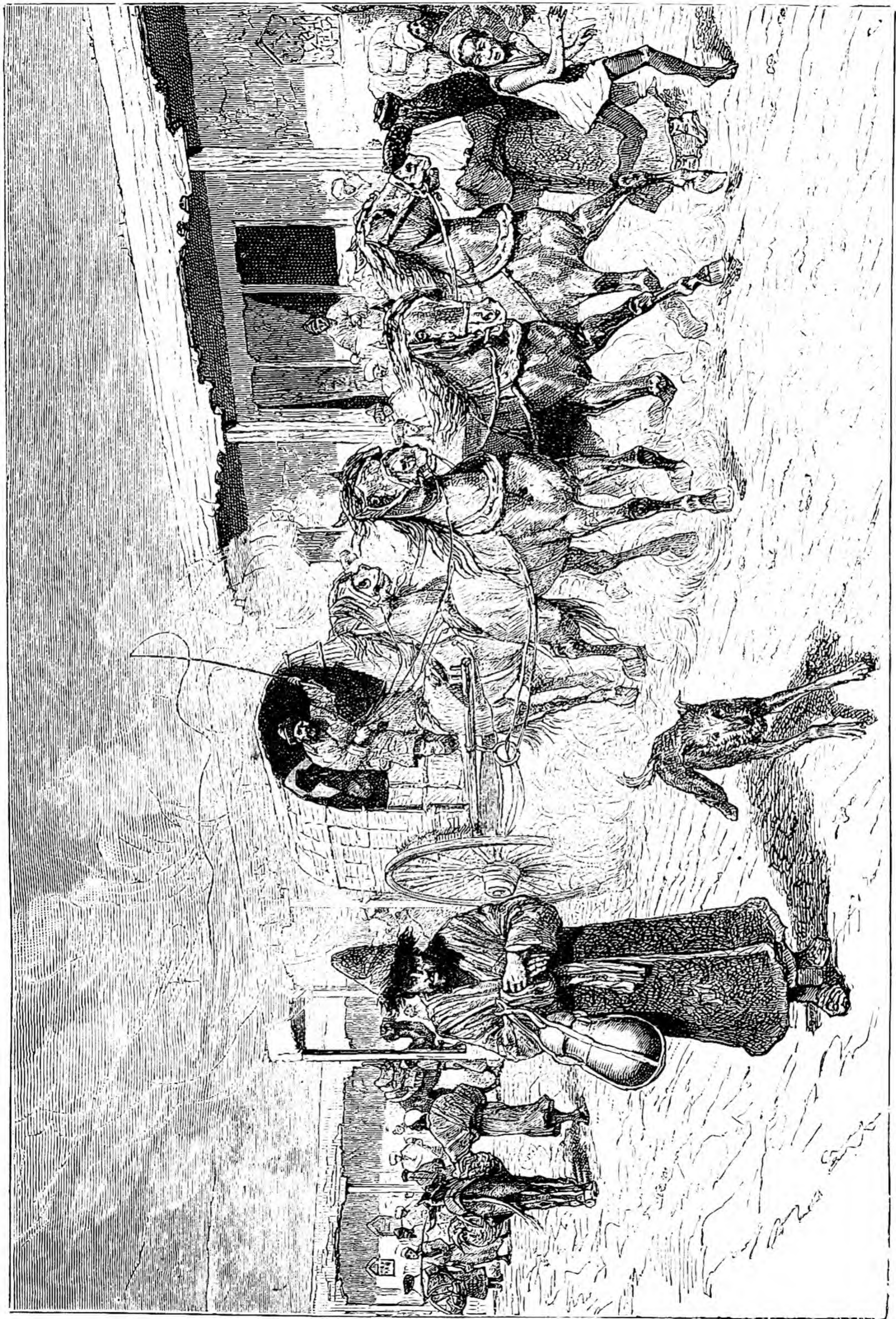
Chinese can display when their anger is roused. Thousands of people have been slaughtered, and thousands more have been forced to seek safety in exile. Hence, a country which, while under Yakoob Beg's rule was calculated to contain 850,000 people, is now estimated to include within its 400,000 square miles of territory not more than 600,000. Few countries are more isolated. East and west the Gobi Desert and the Bolor Tagh, or Pamir Steppe, form its boundary; on the north the Thian-shan, and on the



MONGOL CAMP ON THE MOVE.

south the Kuen Lun mountain ranges separate it from the rest of the world. With the exception of fertile oases here and there, Kashgaria is one wide undulating plain of sand and salt, 3,000 to 4,000 feet high, but sloping off to the east, in which direction the Tarim River, already noticed (p. 79), flows until it loses itself in the Lob-nor. In the summer the climate is very hot and dry, and in the winter extremely cold. Glaciers creep down from the mountain ranges, supplying tributaries to the Tarim, and sometimes by forming mountain reservoirs, which suddenly burst, carrying destruction far and near. Though the country is rich in gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, coal, jade, and other minerals, few of these are worked to any extent, and the population is chiefly massed in towns on





STREET IN YARKAND, EASTERN TURKISTAN.



oases, either on the tributaries of the Tarim or on the outskirts of the mountains, where some moisture enables the arid soil to bear crops of wheat, barley, maize, rice, cotton, flax, tobacco, and hemp, or on which can be pastured the sheep which grow the fine wool woven into the Turfan shawls, which bear so high a repute in Kashmir and other neighbouring countries. Outside these oases there is little to tempt the wayfarer. Rain is rare, and sand-storms and whirlwinds frequent. In the summer the traveller broils under a merciless sky; in the winter deep snow covers the country like a white blanket. Trees are few, except by the water-courses, but around the villages are usually groves of willow, poplar, and elm, in addition to orchards of various fruit trees.

Of the cities Kashgar, though not the greatest, is the chief, since here Yakoob Beg established his capital. It is built on a plain on both sides of the little river known as the Kizil Su—but from its streets may be seen in the far distance the snow-clad peaks of the Thian-shan and the Aksai Plateau, with the lower hills intervening. The population numbers about 30,000, and owing to the concourse of merchants from the Russian and other portions of the surrounding country—we are speaking of what it was in Yakoob's day—the caravanserais and bazaars present a busier appearance than the actual size of the place would seem to warrant. The town extends for some distance along the banks of the stream, but there are in it no buildings of any beauty or pretension, the old palace of the Ameer itself being merely a great gloomy barrack, consisting of several buildings within buildings, the outer ones occupied by the household troops and officials, the inner by the Ameer and his family. It is hardly likely that matters will have much improved under the Chinese *régime*, for though the Chinese are more tasteful and domestic than the Asiatics of this part of the continent, their rule has up to date been such a continual hand to hand fight that the officials and colonists have not had much time to develop the amenities of life. The Andyanis, or Khokandian merchants, were the most important class in the town, and had Yakoob Beg been a more enlightened ruler, or even allowed longer to remain on his throne, it can hardly be doubted that with the trade he was opening up with Russia and India the city would in time have attained some of the prosperity which in old time attracted the admiration of Marco Polo and the early Chinese travellers. A few miles from Kashgar is the Fort of Yangy Shahr (p. 89), which was one of the last places in which the Chinese held out against Yakoob Beg, and half way on the road to Yarkand lies the city of Yangy Hissar, once a place of some importance commercially and from a military point of view, but now fallen greatly into decay, though, owing to the exceptional fertility of the surrounding country, still not without influence in Kashgarian politics. The road the traveller must traverse in order to reach this town passes through the hamlet of Kokrobat, and skirts the barren, stony desert of Hameed, with its scanty patches of grass and few stunted shrubs, and through the busy little town of Kizil, where are situated furnaces for smelting the iron ore of the lower slopes of the Kizil-Tagh, or Red Mountains. Then come a number of little villages and a fertile plain, on which, on the left bank of the Sargrak, stands Yangy Hissar, or Yanghissar, as its name is sometimes spelt. The town contains about 11,000 houses, huddled together in the wildest confusion—a booth for the sale of silks standing alongside of one used as a stall for the disposal of horseflesh. Yarkand the



ill-fated Lieutenant Hayward\* describes as containing about 40,000 houses, but he estimated the population of the half-deserted town at only 120,000: in all likelihood it is now much less.† Unlike Kashgar, which is an open town, Yarkand (pp. 85, 89) is defended by a strong wall, pierced by five gates, and the streets are never over ten or twelve feet wide, and lined with shops—curiously enough for a Mohammedan town mostly kept by women. Some of the houses possess an upper storey, in which the sharp-eyed observer may notice the women rocking the child's cradle with their feet, a spectacle which, as Mr. Shaw observes, is not common in the East. But, in addition to its military and commercial importance, Yarkand is a "university town," on an expanded rather than a great scale. At the time the lamented pioneer of commerce we are quoting‡ visited it, it possessed numerous mosques, colleges, and caravanserais, or hotels, always crowded with merchants from every part of Asia, dealing in grain, fruit, and leather, of which last article the consumption was very great, the late Ameer not only using it for the boots and saddles of his troopers, but even in some cases for their uniforms also. Many of the bazaars and streets are roofed over as a protection against the sun's rays, and the town is well supplied with water from tanks, which are filled by canals. In every street during the summer ice is sold, iced sherbet, at the cost of a twelfth of a penny the cupful, being one of the most common refreshments of thirsty pedestrians. Pheasants and venison are brought in frozen from the mountains during the winter. Good bread is made "by steaming over boiling water, the loaves being placed in vessels with a false bottom, made of open woodwork. In similar vessels also are cooked various delicacies, which make good and savoury food, especially what the Turks call 'mantoo,' being little balls of forcemeat enclosed in small dumplings with gravy. They are really delicious." Mr. Shaw mentions that, unlike the case in the East generally, the bazaars are not noisy with buyers and sellers, all bargains being conducted in a silent manner with the hands. "The seller, the buyer, and all the officious assistants who never fail to present themselves on this occasion, pull their long sleeves over their hands, and in this way make bids on each other's fingers, saying, 'so many hundreds'—a pull of the fingers; 'so many tens'—another pull; and 'so many units'—another pull." No bargain seems to be thought valid unless made in this manner, which, it may be noticed, was described 500 years ago by Marco Polo. In Yakoob's time—and it is not likely that the Chinese have been able to change the system—the silver "koroos," an ingot of silver, consisted of about 1,100 "tangas," each "tanga," in its turn, containing twenty-five little copper cash, so that if change were required for a piece of bullion a donkey had at the same time to be hired to carry it home. Hence most transactions are done either on account or by barter.

The people are fairly treated. The "corvee," or forced labour, which is the rule in Kashmir, and even in the hill districts of the Punjaub, was unknown under Yakoob's rule. All work done was paid for, and if insufficiently so the men refused to do it. The peasant and coolie also work cheerfully, more like Englishmen than the listless Indian

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XL. (1870), p. 33.

† Sir Douglas Forsyth did not consider it had over a third of that number.

‡ Shaw: "Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashgar" (1871).





labourers, who would take four days to do what these Yarkandians accomplish in one. In Yakooob Beg's time they were paid fourpence per day. But food is cheap. Flour was selling in the spring of 1869 at about a shilling for 26 lbs. weight, and it is said that before the *régime* of Yakooob it was only one-third of that price. Indeed, in 1869 many of the people wearied for the return of the Chinese, who allowed the taxes to be collected by the native officials, and did not in any way interfere

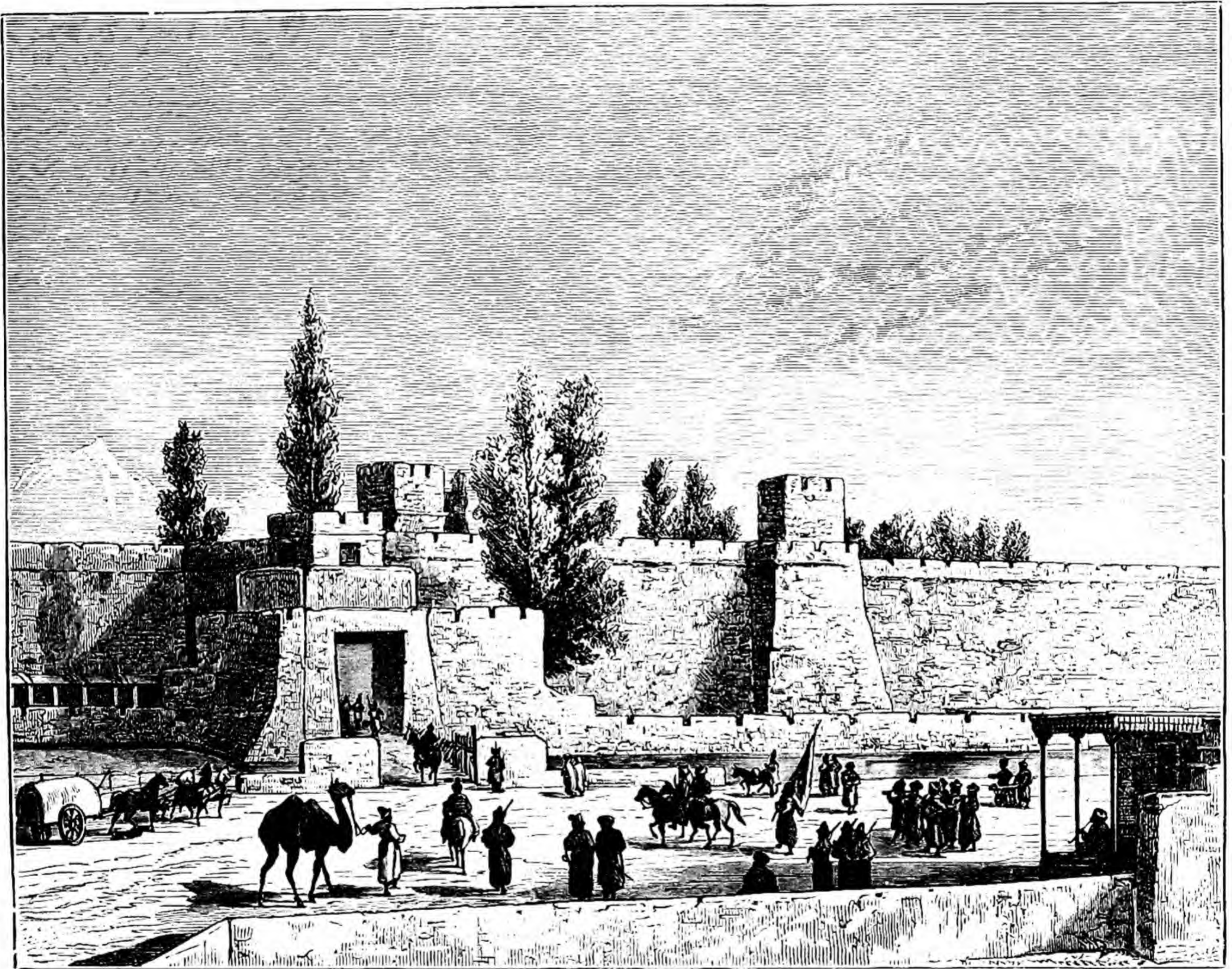


MERCHANTS OF YARKAND, EASTERN TURKESTAN.

with the local administration so long as their moderate tribute was paid. But at the same time they allowed the officials to plunder prodigiously, a course of action which Yakooob, contrary to the wont of Oriental potentates, strictly prohibited. Indeed, under the Chinese, Kashgar was only an inferior town, the seat of government being Yarkand, and here also were the chief Chinese merchants, who vanished when the new ruler made his advent. It is, therefore, only fair that the evidence in favour of the much-abused Chinese Government should be given, for it enables us to see at a glance the relative merits and demerits of the two *régimes* which in a few short years the Yarkandians have had experience of. "What you see on market days now," was the observation of an intelligent



merchant, "is nothing to the life and activity that was in the time of the Khitay (Chinese). To-day the peasantry come in with their fowls and eggs, with their cotton and yarn, or with their sheep and cattle and horses for sale, and they go back with printed cotton, a fur cap, or city-made boots, or whatever domestic necessities they may require, and always with a good dinner inside them; and then we shut up our shops and stow away our goods till next week's market-day brings back our customers. Some of us, indeed,



GATE OF THE FORT OF YANGY-SHAHR, FIVE MILES FROM KASHGAR, EASTERN TURKESTAN.

go out with a small venture in the interim to the rural markets around, but our great day is market-day in town. It was very different in the Khitay time. People then bought and sold every day, and market-day was a much jollier time. There was no Kazi Rais, with his six Muhtasib, armed with the *dira*, to flog people off to prayer and drive the women out of the streets, and nobody was bastinadoed for drinking spirits and eating forbidden meats. There were mimics, and acrobats, and fortune-tellers, and story-tellers, who moved about amongst the crowd and diverted the people; there were flags and banners and all sorts of pictures floating at the shop-fronts; and there was the *jallab*, who painted her face and decked herself in silks and laces to please her customers." "But were not the



people more depraved under this rule than under the stricter system enforced by the Athalik Ghazi?" "Yes, perhaps so," was the reply. "There were many rogues, and gamblers too, and people did get drunk and have their pockets picked; but so they do now, though not so publicly, because we are under Islam, and the shari'at is strictly enforced." Still, there is another side to the question; for though the Chinese rule is tolerant to a fault, it is lax, and the exactions, or "squeezes," of the tax-gatherer know, in this out-of-the-way part of the empire, no bounds. Under Yakoob the villagers would soundly thrash a roguish official, and he did not dare to complain, because had he, the Ameer would in all likelihood have executed him for his fraud. Under the Chinese the same collector may take as much as he pleases, so long as he brings to the imperial treasury the emperor's dues. Yet even in Turkestan they hold up their hands when they hear of Kashmir, in which the taxes are farmed out, and where, between one official and another, from two-thirds to three-fourths of the produce of the peasant's land are filched from him.

About Yarkand are many vineyards. The vines are trained on trellis-work, alongside of which is a trench. During the dry summer this trench serves to bring water to their roots; and during the winter, to protect them from the cold, they are detached from the woodwork and twisted down into the trench, where they lie, well banked over with earth, until the spring comes. In the Kuen Lun Mountains are the fine quarries of jade, a mineral which forms an important article of trade in Eastern Turkestan, and is carved by the natives into many pretty ornaments. It is mined by a trench, being excavated on the top of a rock, and a fire lighted in it. When the heat is believed to have penetrated deep enough, a quantity of cold water is suddenly thrown into the trench, the result of which, of course, is the splitting off of considerable fragments; but the best pieces, and those freest from flaws, are picked up in the beds of streams, when the long tossing about they have been subjected to has the effect of speedily discovering any cracks which exist in the mass, and which, if not detected soon enough, may render the carver's toil of weeks so much labour thrown away. The town of Khotan, or Houtan, as the Chinese call it, or Ilehi, as it is locally known, is the *entrepôt* for all the trade of Tibet, and is therefore a bustling place. Here arrive wool and gold from Tibet, as well as the latter metal from mines in the neighbouring Kuen Lun, and musk, silk, and jade from other parts of the country.

When Mr. Johnson, in 1865, made a flying visit to Ilehi, he found silks, felts, carpets of silk and wool mixed, coarse woollen cloths, and paper made from mulberry-fibre the principal manufactures. The town was surrounded by a wall twenty-four feet high and twenty feet broad. Watchmen patrolled the streets at night; but as they all notified their presence by striking a stick against a hollow piece of wood, which gave forth a shrill, unmusical sound, as a terror to evil-doers they were of limited influence. The Chinese instruments of torture were still in use, and hanging and blowing away from guns were the ordinary modes of inflicting capital punishment. Gallows were erected in the city in various places, so as to be handy in case of accident, and men and women were daily flogged with a leathern thong.\*

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXXVII. (1867), p. 14. Hutton: "Central Asia" (1875), p. 370.



Ush Turfan and Aksu are the names of two other cities. In the neighbourhood of the latter town are rich mines of lead, copper, and sulphur. Coal is the ordinary fuel among the inhabitants; and here the road to Kuldja terminates, so that in times more prosperous than the present a considerable trade was carried on across the Thian-shan to the valley of the Ili. These six cities are the only places of importance in the country; hence, indeed, in old times Eastern Turkestan was called *Alty Shar*, or the Six Cities. But in addition there may be mentioned, as a point of some strategic importance, the post of Serikul, or Tashkurgan, important in this respect, that between it and Afghanistan there intervenes only the Pamir Steppe. Now as YakooB Beg, had not his career been cut short, was evidently pushing on to the Steppe with a view to seizing Wakhan and Badakhshan, he would eventually have embroiled himself with Shere Ali. But China is not an aggressive—only an intensely conservative—nation; and Afghanistan is not likely for long to come to be in a position to trouble any man outside its borders. Maralbashi, at the junction of the Kashgar and Yarkand roads, is another important post, and interesting as the chief stronghold of the Dolans, a tribe living in wretched subterranean dwellings, and of habits and intelligence more degraded than any other race in this region, the Bhots of Tibet, with whom they have been compared, not excluded.\*

Kucha during the Chinese occupation was a place of consequence, and ran competition in wealth with Aksu, but by the latest accounts it has now sunk into insignificance, and is, indeed, little better than a mass of half-deserted ruins. The same may be said of Korla, Kouralia, or Kouroungli, and Karashar, two towns lying to the east of it; while Turfan, through which, in old times, all the caravans proceeding east or west passed, is now desolate, and the country round it a desert. Under YakooB's rule the country between Yarkand and Kashgar was a belt of prosperous farms not small in extent, though rather isolated from each other, and surrounded by orchards of plums, apples, and other fruit trees. A Kashgarian village is, indeed, a collection of farm homesteads, "presenting to the eye of a stranger rather a thinly-peopled district than a community of villagers." The system of agriculture is, however, bad. The soil is soon exhausted, and hence, even the limited amount of soil in any region is neither so fruitful nor so generally capable of bearing crops as it ought to be. Hence, each proprietor seems to have more land than he requires. But outside of these oases the country is barren and bleak in the extreme. "The scanty-marked bridle-track that supplies the place of a highway in every direction, except where the Chinese have left permanent tokens of their presence, affords but little inducement to travellers to come thither: nor must these expect anything but the most imperfect modes of communication and of supply that a backward Asiatic district can furnish. If we wish to imagine the scene along the road from Sanju to Yarkand, we have only to visit some of the wilder Sussex Wealds to have it before us in miniature. The spare dried-up herbage may be still more spare, and the limestone may be more protruding on the Central Asian plain, and the wind will certainly remind you that it comes either from the desert or from the mountain regions; but you have the same undulating, dreary expanse that you have above Crowborough. The miserable sheep, watched by some

\* A sketch of the principal races of Central Asia is given in "Peoples of the World," Vol. III., pp. 221—288, and Vol. IV., pp. 239—288, etc.



nomad Kirghiz, will alone forcibly remind you that you are far away from the heights of the South Downs. In the far distance you will see the cloud-crested pinnacles of the Sanju Devan or of the Guoharbrum, and then the traveller cannot but remember that he is in one of the most inaccessible regions in the world.\* Yet the high-road from Kashgar to Aksu, Kucha, Korla, Karashar, and Turfan, along which all the traffic that passes or passed from China to Dzungaria, Kashgar, Kokand, and Bokhara, Mr. Boulger justly characterises as a masterpiece of engineering skill, considering the character of the road itself and the circumstances under which it was constructed. The heterogeneous races who have at different times sought a home, a refuge, or wealth in Kashgar are, as a rule, frugal and tolerably honest; but the country suffers from the want of cheap and easy communications between the different parts of it, and between it and other countries—above all, India. The rivers in the country are scanty, but still they contain, especially during the spring time, when the snows are melting, water enough for all purposes of irrigation, though they can never be utilised as highways, nor even made to do so in an indirect manner by filling canals. The climate is, if not pleasant, healthy enough. The people suffer from no prevalent disease, except goitre, which is common in Yarkand and the more mountainous parts. Altogether the character of the country is such that, without necessarily entertaining the over sanguine views that were in the early days of Yakoob Beg's reign held regarding its future, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that, considering its natural resources and position, it ought, under a settled government, to advance greatly beyond any point it has attained since the day when Alexis won the heart of Lalla Rookh.

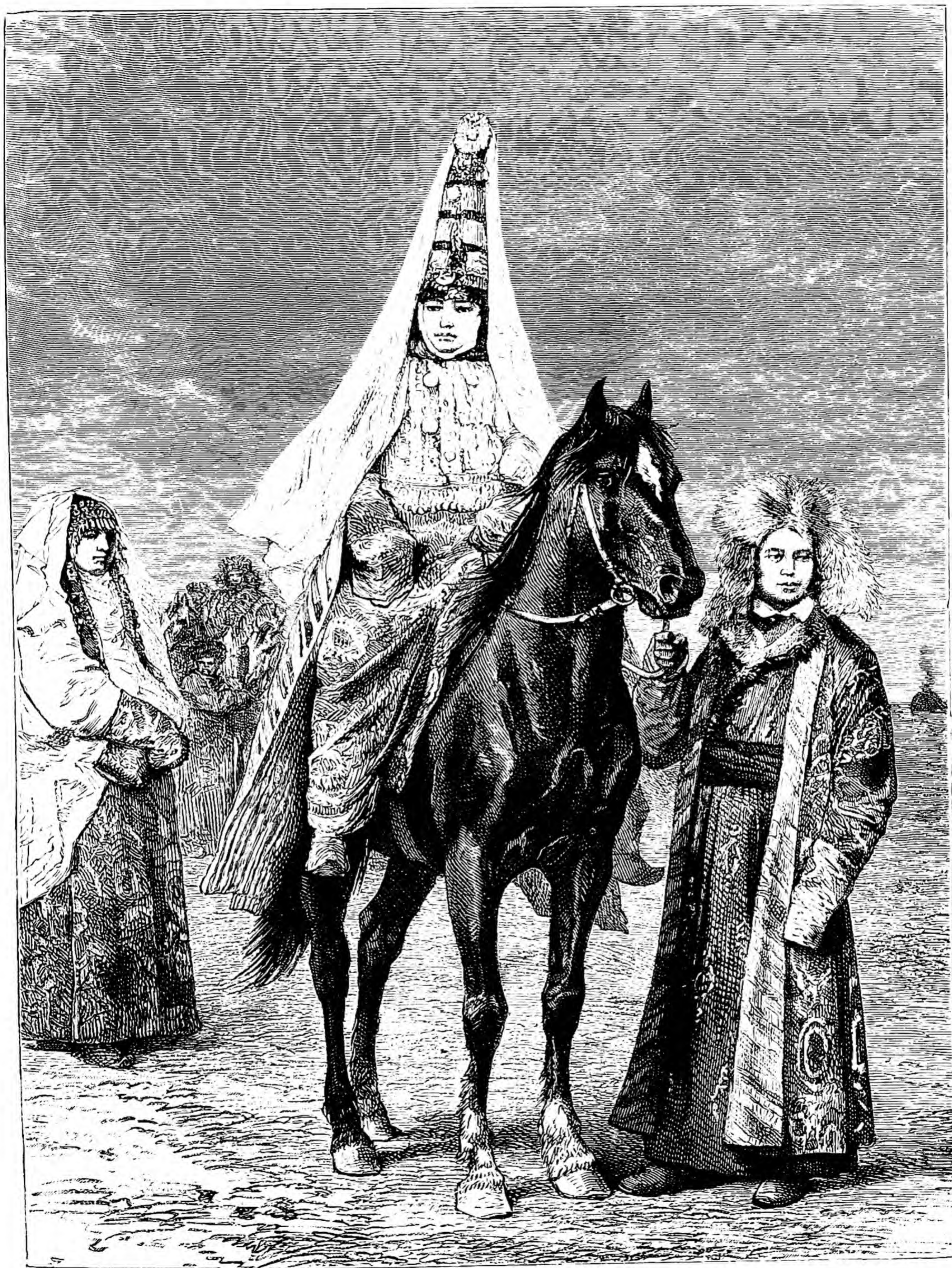
#### KULDJA.

On the other side of the Thian-shan, in the fertile valley of the River Ili, shut in by lofty ranges of mountains, from which descend cool streams to fertilise the whole region, was, up to the time of the revolt which drove the Chinese out of Turkestan, the prosperous province of Dzungaria, a region which comprised the valley and much of the surrounding country. The capital of the province was Kuldja, a large city, prosperous and pleasant beyond the lot of almost any town of Central Asia. But in 1871 the Chinese fortunes stood low in Turkestan. Yakoob Beg was master of almost the whole country, and the Tungan rebels, to whom that unscrupulous soldier had played the rôle of the man to the horse in the fable, had, with the Tarantchis,† captured Kuldja, and during the eleven years they had held it had all but depopulated the neighbouring country. Then in 1871 Russia stepped in, and after defeating the Tungans and Tarantchis, annexed the valley of the Ili, with the distinct promise that it would be surrendered whenever the

\* Boulger: "Life of Yakoob Beg," p. 12; Bellow: "Kashmir and Kashgar" (1875); Henderson: "Lahore to Yarkand" (1876); Gordon: "Roof of the World" (1875); "Report of a Mission to Yarkand and Kashgar" (1875), &c. This volume contains contributions regarding the result of Sir Douglas Forsyth's Embassy, by the officers engaged in it. Capt. Trotter, R.E., has also given an abstract of the geographical observations of the mission in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLVIII. (1878), pp. 173—234.

† Descendants of Kashgarian labourers imported by the Chinese into Kuldja in 1762.





KIRGHIZ BRIDE.



Chinese should again be able to maintain order in Turkestan. At that time this prospect seemed faint, and Russia, doubtless, considered Kuldja hers for ever. Indeed, as early as 1845, soon after the foundation by Prince Gortschakoff of the military settlement of Kopal, on a fertile plateau at the base of a snow-capped mountain of the Ala-tagh range—ostensibly to protect the Kirghiz, Cossacks of the Great Horde, who had been formally annexed to the country erected into the Semipalatinsk district—Russian factories were established in Kuldja and Tchugutchak, though both of these towns were then indisputably Chinese possessions. Still later, in 1860, when the Chinese were gasping for existence in Turkestan, she granted to Russia by treaty the whole of the great Issik-kul Lake, with the fertile country surrounding it. It was, therefore, but natural that in 1871, in order to protect her newly-acquired territory, and stop the ravages of the “rebel” hordes who bordered it, she should annex Kuldja on the conditions mentioned. It is even said that, had not events precipitated matters otherwise, Yakoob Beg might have felt the heavy hand of the Czar. But the Chinese are a long-memored people, and, like the exemplary heir of a spendthrift estate, were rapidly redeeming the possessions which had slipped through the fingers of the incapable or unfortunate rulers of twenty years before. Finally, Kashgar fell from the grasp of the blang-shattered soldiers of Yakoob Beg, and the army of General Tsao Tsung Tang appeared at the base of the Thian-shan, and demanded the recession of the province which had for six years been lying in pawn on the other side of that historic range. After some threats and a good deal of diplomacy, Dzungaria was, in part at least, re-ceded to China, on condition of her paying the cost of its occupation and certain claims of Russian merchants on the Turkestan authorities, in addition to granting some of the territory and considerable privileges to the Russian traders specified. Altogether, this diplomatic bargain is not a bad one for the Czar, either now or considered in its prospective advantages.

However, the country thus handed over to its old masters is one of the finest in Central Asia, a region where the richest tracts alternate in oases with frightful sandy deserts or dried-up beds of former inland seas. Its population was at one time great. The town of New Kuldja was estimated to contain 75,000 permanent inhabitants, and every year thousands of nomads and merchants from all parts of Asia arrived to attend its famous markets. But since 1860 everything has been in such disorder that the census usually given in the Russian statistical tables must be received as merely approximate. Before the insurrection the population of the province—Tarantchis, Tungans, or Dungan (p. 96), Chinese, Sibos, Kalmuks (p. 96), Kirghiz and Torgots—was 350,000. In 1871 the number was estimated at 114,337, but later statistics put it at 600,000, scattered over 148,000 square miles of territory. As the population has gradually increased under Russian rule, the latter census may perhaps be tolerably correct.

Kuldja is, in reality, the centre of Asia, and with the surrounding districts of the ancient kingdom of Dzungaria, extinguished by the Chinese in the eighteenth century, is considered by M. Semenoff, an eminent Russian geographer, who directed one of these notorious “scientific expeditions” (mainly consisting of Cossack cavalry), as the point from which, from time immemorial, numerous races have migrated to the low and arid steppes



of the Aralo-Caspian depression, and the still more distant and better-favoured regions of the West. Here, and on the fertile and smiling banks of the Ili and Irtysh, the migrating hordes lingered for a time, loth, as it were, to venture out into the unknown plain before them, stretching far away into sandy deserts that separate Europe from Asia, until a new tide of popular migration forced them at last to strike their tents, and depart westward from their mountainous halting-grounds.\*

There were two towns of the name of Kuldja, about twenty-five miles apart. Old or Tartar Kuldja, which has for nine years been the head-quarters of the Russian administration of the province of Ili, is, however, the only one now in existence, for the other, Hoi-yuan-tchen, New or Mantchu Kuldja, which was a flourishing city of about 75,000 inhabitants until the date of the Mohammedan rising in 1858, was, as noticed, taken by the "rebels," the whole population put to the sword, and the city reduced to ashes.† The place has not been rebuilt, and presents an appearance dismal in the extreme. Many buildings, especially the official residences, have been utterly razed to the ground, and in places the earth is white with fragments of human bones; while, at the date of Dr. Schuyler's visit, skulls, and even whole skeletons, could be seen in every direction. Only a few Tungan families lived among the ruins of Buddhist temples with their broken idols; and the palace of the governor, with the limiting wall, beyond which no man was allowed to pass under pain of death, still stood, as if in mockery of the fate that befell it. Past all flows the Ili, as of old; but instead of being covered with boats, as in the palmy days of Kuldja, it is now silent and lifeless. "The ground is accursed," remarked one of the rebel leaders; "no one will live here again." For two years the Tungan and Tarantchi army sat before the town. At last it was taken. In the morning there were 75,000 people within its walls: by night not a soul was left alive. Many were butchered at once; some killed their families and then themselves; and many ran to the steppes, only to be cut down there or to die in a few days from starvation. Everything in the city worth plundering and portable has been carried away; even the beams of the houses have been torn out to serve either as firewood or as material for new constructions. But it is believed that there is still buried among the ruins much treasure, a belief justified by the fact that in the governor's palace eighty thousand ounces of silver were found.

Then, after slaughtering the inhabitants of other towns in the valley, or subjecting them to heavy ransom, the Tungans and Tarantchis, as might have been expected, set to quarrelling among themselves, and fought several battles, until the Russians interfered and settled matters by becoming masters. Everywhere through the valley are still traces of the ravages of these fiendish hordes, who ought much sooner to have been crushed by the nearest civilised power: dried-up canals, abandoned fields, withered forests, and "every few miles dismantled and ruined cities, which but ten years before had sheltered a civilised and hard-working population." The industry and taste of the Chinese were, *inter alia*, displayed in the planting and maintenance by constant irrigation of artificial forests; but after the Huns of Central Asia were allowed to displace civilisation by savagery these

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXXI. (1861) and Vol. XXXIX. (1869), in addition to the works of Osten-Sacken, Regel, Ujfalvy, and other scientific explorers of the last few years.

† Schuyler: "Turkistan," Vol. II. (1876), pp. 162 *et seq.*; Morgan: *Proceedings Roy. Geog. Soc.* (1881), p. 150.



trees perished from drought. Alimtu, Bayandai, Tehimpantzi, &c., are all ruined places, the surrounding fields deserted and choked with weeds; but Tehin-tcha-ho-dzi was left unharmed, being chiefly inhabited by Mohammedans; it has the unmistakable "pungent odour which hangs about boxes and parcels brought unopened from China and Japan." Suidun is another Chinese-Russian town, over his visit to which Dr. Schuyler grows almost enthusiastic. Instead of the narrow, crooked streets of Tashkend, in five days he had arrived at a town with



TUNGANS AND KALMUKS OF KULDJA.

broad, straight avenues shaded with trees, and bordered with buildings of brick, beautifully carved and moulded, roofed with tiles, and with latticed windows and porticoes. Instead of dowdy-figured women swathed in long, shapeless dressing-gowns, and faces hidden by black horsehair veils, "there were stout, healthy, and smiling women chatting over their marketing, the bright, orange-coloured marigolds in their wonderful coiffures, or their coquettish little caps, contrasting well with the indigo blue of their gowns. Instead of Sarts and Uzbeks in gowns and turbans, there were Chinese and Tungans in wadded petticoats, short jackets, long moustaches, and pigtails." The town itself is square in outline, and strongly protected by a wall and battlements, and is capable of standing a



determined siege. The present town of Kuldja is very much like Suidun, but it is built on a larger and grander scale; and at a glance one sees that the place is a Tartar town, with the Chinese polish and civilisation very thinly laid on. All the houses are built of clay, with flat roofs, like the buildings in the Uzbek countries of Central Asia. The bazaars are not of great interest, and the visitor who expects to pick up anything precious in the way of porcelain and "curios" will be disappointed, for everything of value has long ago been bought by the Russians, so that a fresh arrival has to resort to the Aksakal, or Governor, in order to find out what private individuals have still anything to sell; or, in



"TARTAR" OF KULDJA.

other words, has to resort to something very like force. In the town itself, or its suburbs, the Russians established paper-mills, vermicelli and other manufactories; but the principal buildings are the mosques (p. 100) and a Buddhist temple. Altogether, at the date of Dr. Schuyler's visit in 1873, the population of the city was about 10,000, of whom fully one-half were Tarantchis.\*

The Ili, or Eelee—a name which is also sometimes given to Kuldja, the chief town on its right bank—is a large river which, after flowing 300 miles through the Kuldja country from the snows of the Thian-shan, falls into Lake Balkash. The vale

\* Besides Dr. Schuyler's work, and Dr. Lansdell's "Russian Central Asia" (1885), descriptions of the races will be found in a paper by Dr. Radloff in Petermann's *Geographische Mittheilungen*, 1866, pp. 88, 250. For a full account of Kuldja, see Clarke in *Proc. R. G. S.*, 1880, p. 489 *et seq.*, and Morgan, *Ibid*, 1881, p. 150.



through which it runs is 100 miles in breadth, and averages over 1,000 feet above the sea. The banks are low, and though the river is, at Kuldja, more than a mile broad, the current flows with great rapidity. In the upper part of its course it is surrounded by the wild and magnificent scenery of the Thian-shan and its spurs, but in its middle part it passes between endless fields of grain and other crops, and amid groves of peach, apple, and pear trees. Near its banks stood the old capital of the Chagatai Empire, and the very name of this once important city of Ghenghiz Khan and his descendants (Almalik) signifies "a grove of apple trees." Apple orchards, it may be remarked, are the most common feature of the country. Fort Vernoe, an important Russian post and rising town, forty-seven miles to the south of the ford over the Ili, at the base of the Trans-Ilian Ala-tagh, and nearly 2,000 feet above the sea, is surrounded with natural orchards of apple and apricot trees bearing excellent fruit, and the mountains in the vicinity are clothed with abundant pine and other timber. Again, Tashkend, much further to the west, is in the centre of cotton fields, and here rice and wheat are also grown, though the latter has also to be brought from the Keles Valley, and the vicinity of Chemkend. Mulberry trees are common and vines are abundant, but the fig tree grows only in favoured spots, and probably finds its northern limit in the Trans-Chu district, in the neighbourhood of Tashkend, where the fruit in the middle of September is not quite ripe but extremely sweet. Gardens surround nearly every house, and between these are fields of lucerne and corn, cotton, sesame, and the zedoary tubers, used so extensively throughout India and High Asia as perfumes and aromatic tonics. In the Ili valley there were planted, after the fall of the Dzungarian Kingdom, numerous Chinese settlements, each embosomed among lofty trees; for the artificial cultivation of timber is possible even in so dry a climate as that of Central Asia, and wherever the industrious Chinese comes there he makes a garden. Vines and pomegranates require to be sheltered in winter, but bear fruit lavishly, whilst everywhere plums, apricots, pears, and apples flourish with great luxuriance. Rice and maize are also among the Kuldja crops, and melons are so large that even the Californian, could he see them, would be forced to acknowledge that something in the cucurbitaceous line can be grown out of the Sacramento Valley. Dr. Schuyler, indeed, considers it the richest part of Central Asia, and about the only part acquired or occupied by the Russians which will ever repay the labour spent over it. The soil we have seen is fertile, and will yield abundant crops. The mountains abound in iron and copper, and good coal is found within fifteen miles of the city of Kuldja, and sold at from 5s. to 8s. per ton. Beef and mutton cost 1½d. to 2d. per lb., and a fowl can be bought for 2d. Flour is 7d. per pud of 36 lb., maize and wheat half that price, and rice and other grain are less, though prices have doubled and even trebled since the advent of the Russians. But at present the trade of the province is unimportant: even in the Chinese times neither the imports nor the exports reached, according to Dr. Schuyler's information, £30,000 per annum.

For the last 165 miles of its course the Ili passes through a sterile, sandy steppe, and debouches into Lake Balkash (about 780 feet above the sea), through a delta covered with thickets of reeds seventeen feet high, and almost impenetrable, except to the boars, tigers, and other animals which haunt such places all along the



shores of this lake, which, with the two Ala-Kuls,\* appears to be the last remnant of a great dried-up inland sea. The river from Old Kuldja to New Kuldja is navigable at high water for about two and half months in the year, and then with great difficulty, on account of the shoals and gravelly banks. From New Kuldja to the Ili station—280 miles—it is practicably navigable at all times of the year, and easily at high water. Finally, the section from the last-named point to Lake Balkash is easily navigable, but the trade has not yet sufficiently developed to make the utilisation of the stream a matter of much importance. In the mountains, which the traveller through the Ili valley never loses sight of, and the occasional cool breezes from which relieve the terrible summer heats, wild goats, deer, hares, and other animals sport among the woods of pine, poplars, willows, birches, and wild olives. Curiously enough, the dark brown sea-sparrows of the Kurile and Aleutian Islands (*Cinclus pallasii*) are found on the Karabura Mountains; while on the southern slope of the same mountains, as well as in the Kirghiznin-Alatau, is alone found the white-bellied variety (*C. leucogaster*) of the same bird. The ular, a partridge (*Megaloperdix nigellii*) weighing from ten to fifteen pounds, is common; but the red-legged partridge of the Chu and Syr Daria Mountains is rare, or entirely absent from the Kuldja Mountains. Silk-weaving is not common in Kuldja, but in the valley of the Syr Daria and on all the southern affluents it is one of the great industries of the settled population, as is also the business of rearing the mulberry and the silkworm. It might, perhaps, be extended here also.

Trade has been so disorganised of late that it would be difficult to say exactly of what it at present consists, and under the Chinese régime will no doubt be entirely revolutionised, in spite of the clause in the new treaty which stipulates that Russians are to have free commercial intercourse with the Chinese provinces. Felt, silk, bang, wool, gold, silver, cotton, may be looked upon as among the exports of the surrounding region; while opium, spices, sugar, tea, linen cloths, kinkal, broadcloth, Kashmir shawls, leather, firearms, indigo, brass utensils, prints and calicoes, iron, silk, caps, cochineal, porcelain, cutlery, tobacco, snuff, padlocks, &c., are among the articles that the wild Kirghiz and other tribesmen mostly buy. But British trade with these provinces must now be looked upon as a forgotten dream, whether Slav or Mongol is to rule it.

The soil of some parts of Central Asia is extremely fertile. In the valley of the Arys wheat produces thirty-fold; lucerne, after three cuttings, grows up nearly three feet high, and is prevented from bending down by its density, the stalks supporting each other, the outer ones alone bending down to the ground.† The sorghum millet and other crops are equally rank; for though the winter is extremely cold, the summer is correspondingly hot, and the facilities of irrigation in many of the drier parts of the country are great. The scenery near the shores of Issik Kul—120 miles long, 33 broad, and elevated 4,900 feet above the sea—is said to be very beautiful; while the peaks covered with eternal snow, the torrents, and the wild rocks, add to the charm of the still more attractive country immediately along the banks of the lake. The deep, blue, brackish waters of the lake, though full of fish which are never caught,

\* Kul is the Turki word for a lake, and is equivalent to the Mongol *Nor*.

† Severtsof: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XL. (1870), p. 371.



are solitary enough now ; but it is known that once on a time cities of considerable magnitude existed along its desolate shores. To this day the strand is strewn with



TARANTCHI MOSQUE AT KULJJA.

skulls and bones, evidently of Kirghiz, the remnants, possibly, not of some "great battle in the west," as the natives tell, but of washed-away cemeteries in the near vicinity. Under the clear waters of the lake, it is said, ruins can yet be seen of submerged towns ; and it is certain that in digging in the neighbouring country brick walls,



sculptured stones, and inscriptions in an unknown alphabet have been found. Indeed, the station-houses near the lake are often paved with diamond-shaped tiles, some plain, others covered with a blue glaze, which had been found in the lake, and by the peasants while ploughing their fields in its vicinity.

Owing to the uncertain tenure of the Russian occupation of Kuldja, they have not permitted the valley to be colonised by their own people; and it is, indeed, doubtful whether the shiftless moujik would be able to make as much out of the valley as did the Chinese, with their industrious habits and careful system of agriculture. The people in the vicinity of Kuldja are mostly Tarantchis, and with a few exceptions are agriculturists. The valleys of the rivers Kunges and Kash, which are prolongations of the valley of the Ili to the east, are inhabited by the Torgots and Kalmuks (pp. 96, 97), remnants of the old Dzungarians, and descendants of the Kalmuk tribes who at the beginning of last century returned from the Lower Volga. Much of these valleys consists of salt-pools and districts destitute of water. But about one-half is fitted for agriculture, and in the middle and upper part is possessed of abundance of water, pastures, meadows, and even forests. In the upper part of the valley, and in the mountains, there are reputed to be many kinds of trees—poplar, apple, apricot, elm, fir, birch, mountain-ash, &c.—but the lower part of the valley is waterless and salt. The Russians have now surrendered the province; but looking at the question entirely apart from political considerations, it is questionable whether in the interests of the wretched inhabitants—Chinese and Tungan—they ought to leave them to the mercilessness of the fierce Tarantchis, unless the Chinese provide an army strong enough to keep order. Such fearful massacres as were perpetrated at the time of the insurrection cannot be permitted to be repeated. But so little confidence had the Chinese remaining in Kuldja in the power of the “Khitay” to protect them, that a large proportion of them left as soon as the Russians withdrew.

#### TIBET.

The resident in the northern parts of India finds his view all along that frontier of the empire bounded by a giant range of mountains, the Himalayas. At least, so the maps represent it. In reality these mountains are more properly a mountainous country, wide in extent, and “often consisting of high parallel ranges divided by great rivers (both ranges and rivers running longitudinally in the same direction of the entire chain),” and finally reaching “a high barren plateau, supported on the outer ranges as on a series of walls.” This high plateau is Tibet, Thibet, or Pe-yul, Bot, or Bodyul—the land of Bod—of the natives, and one of the subject countries of China. With the north-eastern part of the country we are still only slightly acquainted, but from what is known of it the area of Tibet is roughly estimated to be from 600,000 to 800,000 miles, and the population at 6,000,000. The most part of this area is enclosed in the angle between the Hindoo Koosh, Pamir Highlands, the chain of the Kuen-lun Mountains, and the great range of the Himalayas; but though usually designated a plateau, in reality it is a “table with the legs turned up.” In other words, it is traversed by several mountain ranges



which near its western and eastern frontiers interlace in so complicated a manner as to deprive the table-land of any likeness to the upland plain usually so designated. The average elevation of the southern portion is 13,500 feet, though in places it rises to the height of 17,600 feet; but in the north and east it is believed that the tract of country descends to much lower levels. The great Himalayas, twenty summits of which are higher than the loftiest of the Andes, and which we shall by-and-by have something to say about when we cross the ranges on our way out of India, are only connected with the plateau by ridges of lesser elevation, which, to use the simile of a geographer, "project from the highlands like buttresses which rise higher than the walls which they support." The Tibetan table-land stretches away eastward towards the frontier of China proper, but it can only be approached from India through mountain gorges cut out by torrents, and of the wildest and most picturesque grandeur. The four provinces of Tibet are usually divided between the eastern and western divisions of the country, the first region being drained by the Sanpoo,\* which lower down is successively known by the more familiar names of the Dehong and Brahmapootra, and the other by the Indus. Both these rivers lie close together, but they soon separate, the one running eastward and the other westward, and both finally breaking through mountains to the southward, and before they fall into the sea embracing between them the whole of northern India. "Imagine," writes Mr. Shaw, "a wall supporting behind it a terrace of gravel. Suppose the gravel terrace to be hog-backed in the middle, so that the waters rising there run away to the right and to the left till they each find a low place in the wall, and escape away through it." This is the relation which Tibet and its rivers and the Himalayan chain bear to each other. It is still a mysterious region, for the Chinese exclusiveness is there developed to a very pronounced extent; and though travellers have perseveringly endeavoured to enter it, and in many cases have partially succeeded, yet their observations have been conducted under great difficulties, and in every case have been of a very limited character. But in spite of Tibet proper not being well known, the outliers of the country are more familiar, for natives of Ladâk (pp. 104, 109)—sometimes known as Middle Tibet, though politically a part of the Maharajah of Kashmir's territories—Zanskar, and other waifs and strays from the more accessible portion of Western Tibet, every year visit the Kangra and other Indo-Himalayan valleys. "Black tents of peculiar make appear for a few days at a time in the winter on open spaces by the roadsides, and shelter dingy families of narrow-eyed Tibetans—petty traders who come down with their wares. They are not prepossessing in appearance, with their high cheek-bones, their dirt, and their long pigtailed; but they are the most good-tempered of mortals, and they always greet you with a grin. Moreover, every year the few English sportsmen who penetrate into the wilder parts of Ladâk bring down reports of the wonderful animals to be found there, and of the curious customs of the Buddhist inhabitants. Wild sheep as large as ponies, wild cattle with bushy tails like horses, and long hair on their flanks reaching nearly to the ground, besides

\* That is, "*the River*." In that portion of its course still unexplored it falls 8,000 feet, if not more, so that future explorations must result in some grand discoveries in fluvial geography. (*Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, p. 274.) See also *Proceedings Roy. Geog. Soc.*, 1885, p. 292; *Ibid.*, 1887, p. 352.



antelopes and gazelles, are to be obtained by those who toil sufficiently; while for non-sportsmen the curious monasteries perched on almost inaccessible rocks, with their Romish ceremonial, their prayer-wheels, their gigantic images and ancient manuscripts, form the chief attraction." But long before Tibet is approached from China Tibetan tribes are met with, as, indeed, Mr. Baber noted in his recent journey. Though the country lies in a comparatively low latitude, yet its great elevation renders it in the winter almost as cold as the Arctic regions. Owing, however, to the mountains and plains which intervene between it and the sea robbing the winds of their moisture, its excessive dryness prevents either the cold being so severely felt as otherwise it would be, or the country being unhealthy. Flesh exposed to the Tibetan air dries until it crumbles into powder, but it never putrefies. Wood does not rot, but it breaks from mere brittleness caused by the arid atmosphere, and a person dressed in sheepskins gives out long electric sparks when his garments approach any conducting substance. The very rocks during the winter crumble into powder, and mixing their dust with that of the dry soil, are tossed up by the high wind in blinding clouds. The air is, however, bracing after one has got acclimatised to it, while a region in which there is perpetual snow at 16,000 to 18,000 feet, and where enormous glaciers exist, must act as a sanatorium to the jaded dweller in the moist, enervating plains of India, or even in the Asiatic khanates further west. At 18,544 feet—2,800 feet higher than on Mont Blanc, and 1,279 feet above the snow-line of the Andes in Ecuador—bushes and pastures make their appearance; and though lower down grazing land of a bare and scanty description stretches, yet cedars and birches—the only trees of the country—are only met with in a few very sheltered or comparatively moist places on the hills. Salt and other lakes of large size (p. 105) are not unfrequent, but water-courses and water generally are not characteristics of Tibet. In the plains the inhabitants are herdsmen, but in the valleys, where fruit-trees, the vine, and grain can be cultivated by aid of irrigation and the construction of terraces along the slopes, the people are for the most part agriculturists. Hence the skill and industry demanded of the Tibetan farmer have rendered him a peculiarly intelligent and hardy individual.

A nation so remote from the busy world cannot be expected to make great progress in arts or commerce; but the country is known to abound in silver, copper, and tin, though the absence of fuel renders these riches of little value. Gold mines are worked and jealously guarded by the Chinese, and the deposits of salt, borax, sulphur, and nitre are developed to a considerable extent. The produce is carried by caravans consisting of long trains of pack oxen, sheep, mules, and horses, the rivers being crossed by inflated skins. Jewellery and fabrics of wool and goats' hair, Buddhist idols, &c., are also traded to Nepaul and Bhotan; fine broadcloths and Indian manufactures are imported in exchange. A little trade was also done with Turkestan during Yakoob Beg's time, and this will very probably increase by-and-by. With China there is, however, a large traffic, the produce of Tibet being exchanged for tea, Chinese manufactures, and European cutlery.\* The brick tea-trade is, however, the most important one in the country. Of late a most interesting

\* In Mr. Clements Markham's monumental introduction and notes to the "Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa," is given an almost exhaustive *résumé* of everything known about the country, or written regarding it, up to the date of that publication (1876).



report on this subject has been given by Mr. Colborne Baber, at the date of his journey British Consul at Chung-King, in a document so valuable that as the original\* is little known we may supply a condensation of it, supplemented by some notes derived from sources which the author has not drawn upon.

To the Tibetan, Mr. Baber remarks, tea is more than a luxury, it is an absolute

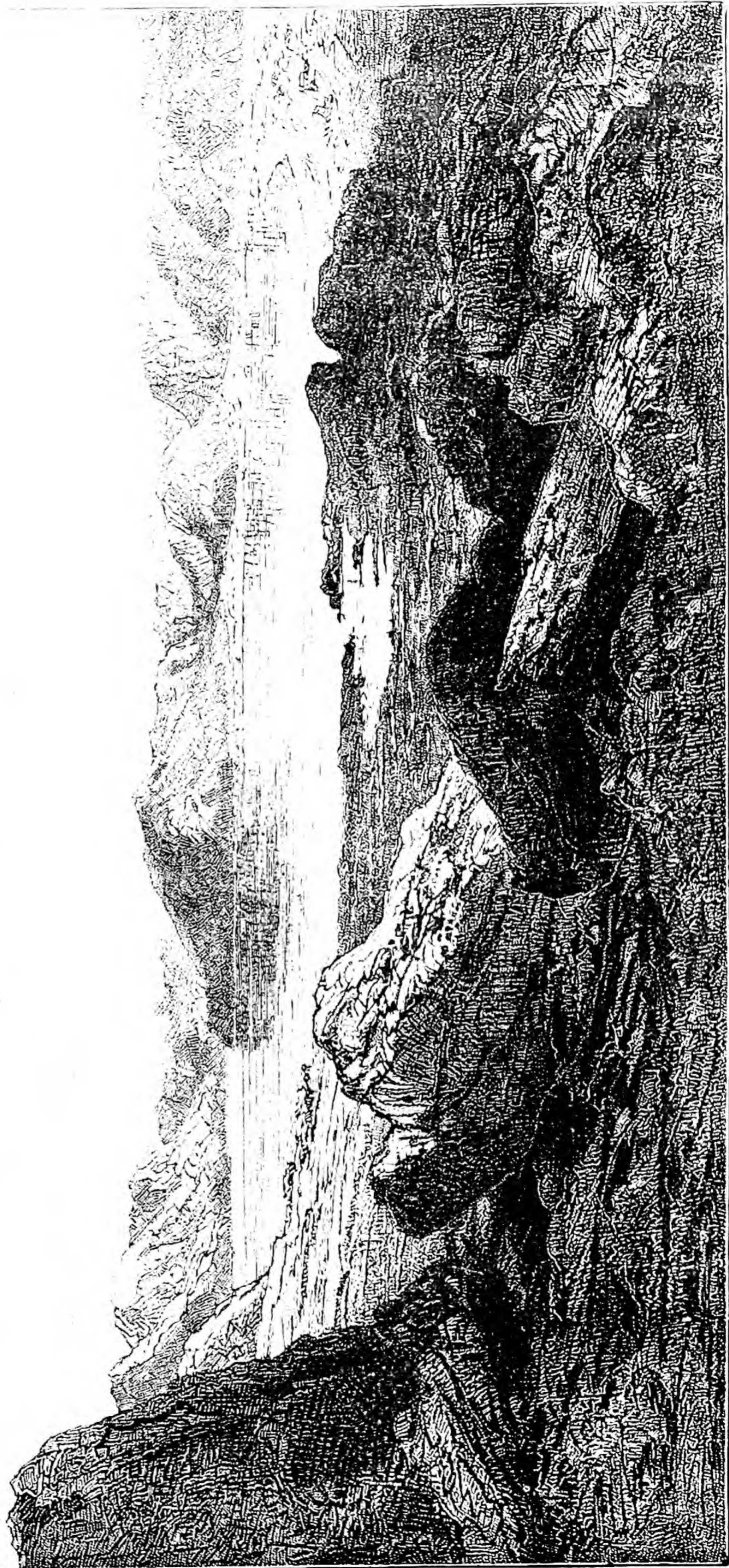


NATIVES OF THE VALLEY OF SITHI, PROVINCE OF LADAK.

necessary ; a fact, indeed, noted by Horace della Penna, an old Capuchin friar, long resident at Lhasa, who wrote in 1730 :—"The Tibetans drink a quality of tea made with milk, butter, and salt, and leave a little tea in the cup, in which they make a paste with barley-meal, and afterwards eat it." This statement is confirmed by Bogle, Turner, and Manning, and other later visitors, and though they differ as

\* Supplementary Papers of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. I., p. 192.





VIEW OF THE SALT LAKE OF TSOMORIRI, WESTERN TIBET.



to the quality and quantity of tea drunk by the Tibetans, it is undisputed that it constitutes their principal beverage morning, noon, and night, and that most of it comes from the province of Se-chuen (p. 38). Deprived of the costly, but indispensable, stimulant, he suffers from headache, grows nervous, restless, out of condition, and altogether unhappy. In outlying districts mothers are careful to keep the seductive beverage from their children for fear lest they should grow up unable, on occasion, to go without it. And yet, to European taste, the infusion, as prepared by the Tibetans, is the remotest possible imitation of tea. The Tibetan teapot is a wooden churn, much like a butter-churn, into which the boiling infusion is poured through a strainer; a little salt is added, and some twenty strokes applied with a dasher pierced with five holes. A lump of butter is then thrown in, and the compound is again churned with from 100 to 150 strokes, administered with much precision and regularity. The tea is then ready for drinking. It will be remarked that, with the substitution of salt for sugar, the Tibetan preparation is of much the same composition as the tea drunk in England; but the presence of the salt is not perceptible, and Mr. Baber could detect no flavour of tea. It is impossible accurately to describe the taste of the infusion; but to force a comparison, it is something like weak English tea with rich milk, but without any sugar or tea. And yet nobody would mistake it for milk and water, still less for butter and water; for the tea principle affects the flavour, while itself becoming modified into some un-tea-like astringent. It is evident that astringency is the property desired, seeing that the many thousand Tibetans who cannot afford tea use oak bark in its stead. The teacup of the Tibetan is a wooden bowl, not seldom an object of high price and elaborate workmanship cased in precious metals and encrusted with jewels. In this he allows the tea to stand for a minute or two, and when the butter floats freely on the surface, he blows it off into another bowl. The national farinaceous food is "tsampa," flour of grilled corn. The consumer takes up a portion of this between the tips of his fingers and thumb, and opening them with a jerk flicks it over the butter; then moulding it into a consistency, he eats the immature pie-crust without further formality, washing it down with the tea. This is the characteristic nutriment of Tibetans. Two English pounds of butter and ten ounces of tea are considered by the latest observer a liberal, but not lavish, allowance for twenty drinkers for one day.

Mr. T. T. Cooper, who in 1879 was murdered at Bhamo, estimated the export of tea from Se-chuen at only six million pounds annually. Mr. Baber places it at ten millions, though the Tibetans are contented with the most inferior qualities it is possible to manufacture from the refuse of the crop. The poorest Chinaman in Chung-King pays ten times as much for his tea as does the Tibetan. It is, therefore, allowable to conclude that the article sold to the latter is ten times worse, and that this fact holds out some hope for the Assam and Bengal tea merchants being able to run the Chinese out of the market by the introduction of a better quality of their favourite herb. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any really good tea ever reaches Tibet, a supposition borne out by the observations of Mr. Manning, who in 1811 was sent by Warren Hastings on an embassy to Lhasa. Yet the Tibetans are willing to pay for good tea prices of which half a rupee the pound may be taken as the minimum.

As far as Ba'tang is concerned, Mr. Baber considers that there is little prospect



of an outlet for Indian tea; but it is difficult to conceive how the idea of trading between Assam and that place could ever have been conceived. It possibly arose from an impression that Ba'tang is a Chinese city, whereas it is a small Tibetan town of 200 houses, eighteen days distant from the true Chinese border, by a track which, practically closed in winter, crosses four passes at various elevations between 14,000 and 17,000 feet, according to the careful and corrected observations of Captain Gill, R.E.\* Moreover, when the Chinese border is reached at Ta-chienlu, the nearest city of any importance—namely, Yachou—is still seven or eight days distant, and has water communication with the sea. Setting aside for the moment the Tibetan roads, the only practicable way from Assam to Ba'tang is across the Patkoi to Burmah, thence into Yun-nan by the Irrawaddy track, and so northwards by Weisee, a distance of 750 miles—a two months' journey at least in such a country, whereby on arrival at Ba'tang the freight alone, calculated at Tibetan rates, would be half as much again as the market price of Chinese tea. The most direct road would of course be through Tibetan territory; but if Tibet be opened, no purpose can be served by going to Ba'tang. "That town is a junction of high roads to Se-chuen, Yun-nan, and Lhasa, and is consequently a point of great political importance to the Chinese Government. But its sole commercial significance worth the name, although there is a good deal of peddlery, is derived from the passage through it of Yerkalo salt and Yachou tea on their way westwards." Goods—salt among others—are carried in the country on the backs of sheep, each sheep being laden with about 25 lbs. They are very obedient to their drovers' whistles, and if any of them get out of the way, they are easily brought back by the shepherds' dogs. Assam is admirably placed for taking the tea trade in flank, and might even supply Western Tibet "without seriously affecting the Yachou export, since the whole quantity of the latter would only suffice for the consumption of a million Tibetans. The difficulty of crossing the Himalayas may be adduced as the most obvious impediment; but if any track whatever exists—as we know it does—it cannot be more formidable than the icy passes encountered by Abbé Hue on his journey from Lhasa to Ta-chienlu by the Chinese tea-route." The districts where good tea would sell most easily and advantageously are those which are furthest removed from the Chinese tea-route, or, in other words, from those which are nearest to Assam. In 1883 the imports from Tibet into India were valued at £76,637, and the exports from India at £30,224. A mission despatched in 1886 was stopped by various obstacles on the part of the officials.

The Lhasa Government—according to Mr. Kinny—force the sale of tea on their subjects by issuing a certain quantity of it to the governor of each province, and debiting him with the price of it. In order to be no loser by the transaction, he issues a quantity to each family, according to their wealth and status, whether they want it or not, and fixes the price himself. Only the poorest are passed over in this extraordinary method of "pushing a trade."

"It is generally assumed," Mr. Baber goes on to say, "that the obstacles to intercommunication are of a physical nature; but if so, there would be no trade, whereas evidences of a very extensive exchange abound, even so far east as Ta-chienlu, in the use of rupees

\* *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLVIII. (1878), p. 57; and "The River of Golden Sand" (1880), Vol. II., p. 192; Walker: *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1885, p. 65.

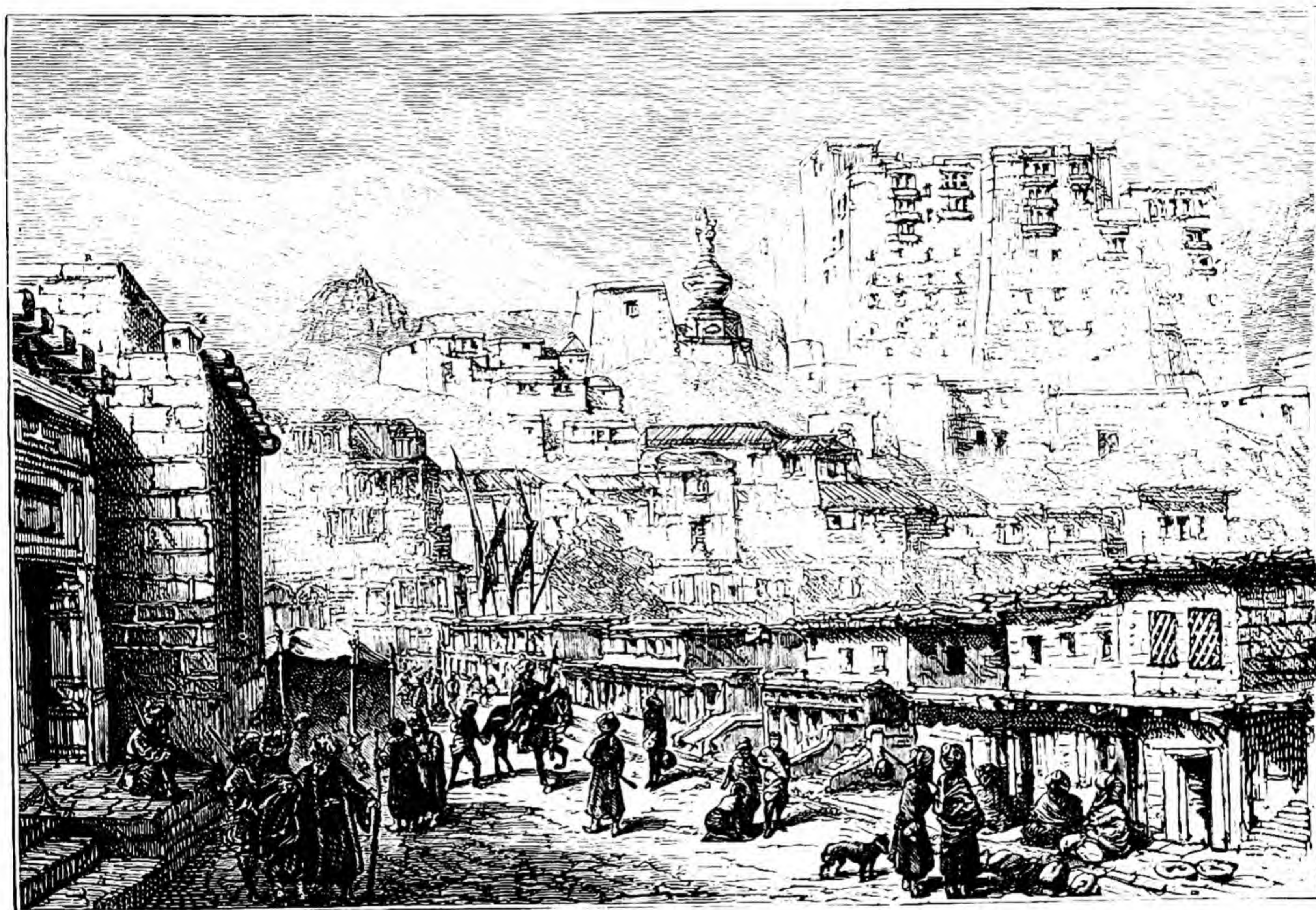


and of many articles of Indo-European origin. To mention some of the more trivial—but on account of their triviality the more convincing—instances, the common dinner plates of the Tibetans, when they use any, are of tin, stamped in the centre with an effigy of some European celebrity. In those which I examined I recognised the Third Napoleon, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Mr. Gladstone, all supposed by the natives to represent Buddhas of more or less sanctity. Round the rim of the plate, in all cases, were stamped the letters of the English alphabet, from A to Z. The most desirable buttons, again, are four-anna pieces, and so strong is the demand that three of these are worth a rupee. British army buttons are as common as blackberries. Even corkscrews are offered for sale in Ta-chienlu, although no one can explain their use. The presence of such miscellaneous and cheap articles testifies to the facility of trade, while the great quantity of rupees proves its extent. But although commercial intercourse crosses the whole breadth of Tibetan countries, diplomatic relations have not yet penetrated to the nearest of them, Lhasa-dé. Yet the distance from Calcutta to Lhasa, in a direct line, is less than from Paris to Berlin. Until such relations are established and maintained, there can be no hope whatever of a Tibetan market for Assam teas. Exploring missions, no matter how well organised or amply furnished, can effect nothing in the interest of the trade so long as the adverse influence of the resident Chinese Legates and of the Lamas is unchecked. No matter how short the route or convenient the road, the hostility of these two parties would be roused to the utmost against any project of a tea trade.”

Eighty years ago the Tibetan merchants told Manning that most of the articles from India which came into Tibet were smuggled by the Fakirs or pilgrims, and that if much gold was sent out of the country to India the Emperor of China would be displeased. Yet for many centuries such a trade existed, until the conquest of Nepaul by the Goorkha Rajah put a partial stop to it. The old tradition of the Indian Governor-Generals, prior to the time of Warren Hastings, was that the Chinese ought to be kept off as far as possible; but the efforts to open up a trade with Western China through Burmah, the exploration of the Eastern Himalayas, the development of the resources of Assam and the Mishmee tribes' country, all prove that this day of isolation is now over. Indeed, the stipulation in the Treaty of Cheefoo that a consul is to be established at Chung-King, “the Liverpool of Western China,” was carried out by Mr. Colborne Baber (whose report we have quoted) being stationed there, and is the best proof that India is determined to draw as near as possible to her neighbours. Still, the physical obstacles of the Himalayas, though great, are trifling compared with the hostility of the Chinese mandarins and the jealousy of the Buddhist hierarchy of the Lamas, operating on the natural timidity of the primitive people whom they hold in civil and religious bonds. Commerce is in the hands of the Government, and so closely is it watched that it is next to impossible for any stranger to enter the country without encountering the garrisons that are stationed at all the inlets to it. This jealousy would be still more intensified by the commotion excited among the Se-chuen merchants were a trade to develop between Assam and Tibet, through Nepaul by the Kirong Pass, through Sikkim by the Chumbi Valley, by the route beyond Sudiych, or over the Patkoi hills; it is doubtful whether the Pekin Government, supposing they were willing, could force these edicts on the Chetu, Ba'tang, or Lhasa mandarins, who



profit by the present state of matters, or whether the Lamas would risk any intercourse between their serfs and the more enlightened Indians. In order to make a Tibetan trade remunerative, Mr. Edgar pointed out, years ago, that it would be necessary to open up not only one but all the Himalayan passes. Up to the present date we have seen nothing to render this revolutionary measure less a *sine quâ non* for trade with Middle Asia. Colonel Lewin considers that if the flock-owners of Tibet were made aware of the fact that at the foot of the Himalayas there was a steady market for their wool, they would drive their sheep thither, and return with our products in exchange. In the same way,



VIEW IN LEH, THE CAPITAL OF LADÂK.

and with improved roads and open passes, large quantities of cows, sheep, goats, cheese, and butter would be brought into India from the same source. At present the export of live stock is limited to the carrying capacity of the animals. The traders drive before them sufficient sheep, goats, or yaks to supply themselves with food on the road, and to carry the merchandise and goods which they bring with them. Of late years even the few ponies, which at one time were bought for sale, have decreased in number and increased in price, so that at present coarse woollen blankets and carpets, a little sheep's wool (to the Northern and Central Himalayan districts), yaks' tails, musk, borax, and rhubarb, are the main exports from Tibet to India. A Tibetan in winter, owing to the severe cold, is "like a moving bed," so heavily is he clothed. Hence English woollens would always be in great demand. However, the Tibetans are somewhat peculiar



in regard to the colours of their garments. "They will not wear blue or black, and only persons of rank wear velvet; their favourite colours are scarlet, purple, liver brown, and a snuff-coloured yellow. Turkey red cloths, prints, and flowered calicoes are in good demand. Imitations of Indian handkerchiefs and Kashmir shawls are very popular among the lower classes; chintzes do not seem to be worn. Cottons are not used save for linings, and as coverings for sacred pictures. Cheap silk handkerchiefs would meet with a large sale here, especially if the sacred sentence, 'Om mani padmi houn,' were woven into the fabric." There is a good demand for indigo and opium, and quicksilver, vermilion, and red and white lead are also imported for gilding the roofs of religious houses. Mirrors, glass, and lanterns find a ready sale, and cutlery would be in great demand were the articles more manufactured after native models. Colonel Lewin considers that the best trade route would be from Darjeeling to China *via* Tibet—this line, not only opening up Tibet, but tapping the rich province of Se-chuen, with its 30,000,000 inhabitants, and its silk, tea, rhubarb, musk, jade, amber, and cinabar. When railway communication has been extended up the valley of the Brahmapootra, an even better route might be found through Assam, but for the present this line is not available. The Tibetans are a peaceful, well-educated, and commercially well-disposed race, and as their faith—that of Buddha—is based on the equality and brotherhood of mankind, religious intolerance does not exist as a barrier against intercommunication with other nations. The Lamas, or governing class, have an interest in keeping up the present state of affairs. They derive a profit from the duties on imported goods and on the sale of permits to traders; while the traders do not desire to see us competing with them, as this rivalry would soon reduce their present enormous gains. The Chinese, in addition to these fears, dread that we shall oust them from their political pre-eminence in the country. However, as the Chefoo Convention sanctions us having intercourse with the country, and sending a mission thither, it is not likely that consuls will long be absent from Shigatze and Lhasa, or that trading posts such as the Russians have at Kiakhta, in Siberia (p. 13), will not be established on the frontier—say at Chumbi and Phaki.\*

The Chinese gained a footing in Tibet so early that in the year 821 the country paid tribute to it, but it was not until the year 1720 that the whole of it came under the yoke of Pekin. Even yet the Government is to some extent under the control of the Buddhist priests, or Lamas, and except in seeing that their tribute is paid, the Chinese leave the people very much to themselves. But the large military force maintained in the country is under the orders of Chinese generals, who also keep in their hands the direction of the chief affairs of state. Captain Gill, however, noticed that in passing from China, the moment the Tibetan frontier was crossed the Mandarin's orders no longer became law; there, also, the Chinese officials do not issue their mandates in the peremptory manner usual elsewhere. When they wish anything they make requests, and do not even expect the Tibetans to protrude their tongues, and say, "La So" at the end of every remark, as is the custom when an inferior wishes to be particularly respectful to his superior. It

\* *Transactions of the Geographical Section of the British Association, Sheffield Meeting, 1879; Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1879, pp. 680—82; and "Explorations in Western Tibet" ("Report of the Survey of India for 1877—8," cited in Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1879, p. 444).*



may be added that, though there are no diseases peculiar to the country, goitre—as is also the case in other parts of Central Asia—prevails to a frightful extent in the more mountainous districts. In some of these parts more than two-thirds of the population have swellings on their throats, some of enormous size.

In Tibet proper there are several towns, but the only one of marked interest is the capital, Lhasa, where reside the Dalai-lama, or chief Buddhist priest, and the principal Chinese political agents. The town is built on a level plain, 11,910 feet above the level of the sea, surrounded by mountains, and dotted over with populous monasteries. Though this region is so elevated, it yields harvests of barley and millet, has abundant pastures, and there are clumps of trees, and even gardens, round the towns and monasteries. The city itself has a circumference of two-and-a-half miles, the central object in which is a Buddhist temple, containing images richly inlaid with gold and precious stones. The bazaars are kept by Tibetans, Kashmiri, Ladaki, and Nepaulese merchants, many of whom are Mohammedans, though Chinese merchants are common. Western Tibet was much exposed to incursions of the Turki tribes, and in the early part of the seventeenth century was annexed to the Sikh Empire of Runjeet Singh. It now forms part of the territory of the Maharajah of Kashmir.\*

## CHAPTER V.

### BURMAH: THE COUNTRY AND THE GOVERNMENT.

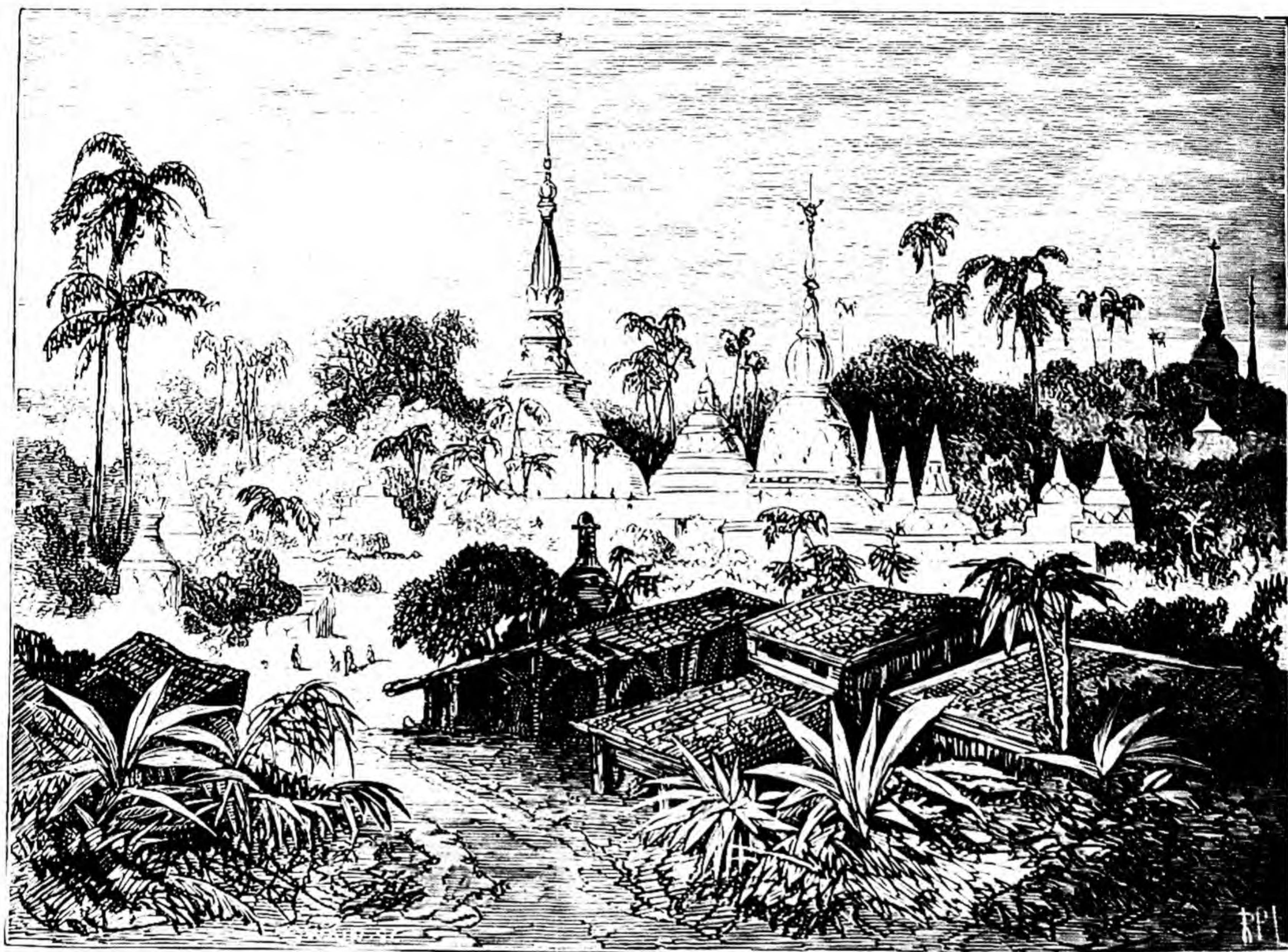
IN the course of our description of Tibet we have more than once touched on the banks of a river, mysterious as to its source, but familiar as to its termination. Where it rises is not yet known, but as it flows through Independent and British Burmah, and is for hundreds of miles navigated by ships and lines of steamers, there are not many rivers of Asia better known than the Irrawaddy—the “Father of Waters,” and the great drainer of Further India (pp. 113, 117). At one time it was believed that the Sanpoo was the upper water of this great river, but this hypothesis recent researches have completely disproved (p. 102). In all likelihood, its main source is the Lu River, which rises in the uplands of Tibet; but the exact source is still a mystery, in spite of the many efforts made to solve it.† Its course runs pretty nearly due south, and though, for the reasons mentioned, it is difficult to say exactly how long it is, roughly speaking it may be said to flow for 1,200 miles, receiving on its way to the sea large tributaries like the Ning-thee, Mogonny,

\* For a description of the religious relations of Tibet, see “The Peoples of the World,” Vol. IV., pp. 129—146, where also will be found a fuller account of the Lamas, their mode of election, their monasteries, and the capital of the country.

† Yule: “Mission to Ava,” p. 273 and Appendix G; Fytche: “Burmah, Past and Present” (1878), Vol. I., p. 268; Anderson: “The Irrawaddy and its Sources” (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XI., 1870, p. 268), and references on p. 102; see also Desgodins: “Le Thibet,” p. 293.



Mali Kha, and Tapaing. Between Rangoon on the east and Bassein on the west it forms a delta, sometimes partially overflowed, comprising about 10,000 square miles of forest, agriculture, and pasture land, and traversed by an inextricable network of the river's branches. The current is navigable even at low water for large vessels as far as Ava, and steamers drawing four feet of water have no difficulty in reaching Bhamo, 580 miles from the mouth. In the course of its traverse the Irrawaddy passes through Lower and Upper Burmah, and China, so that its mouths are under British control, and therefore the



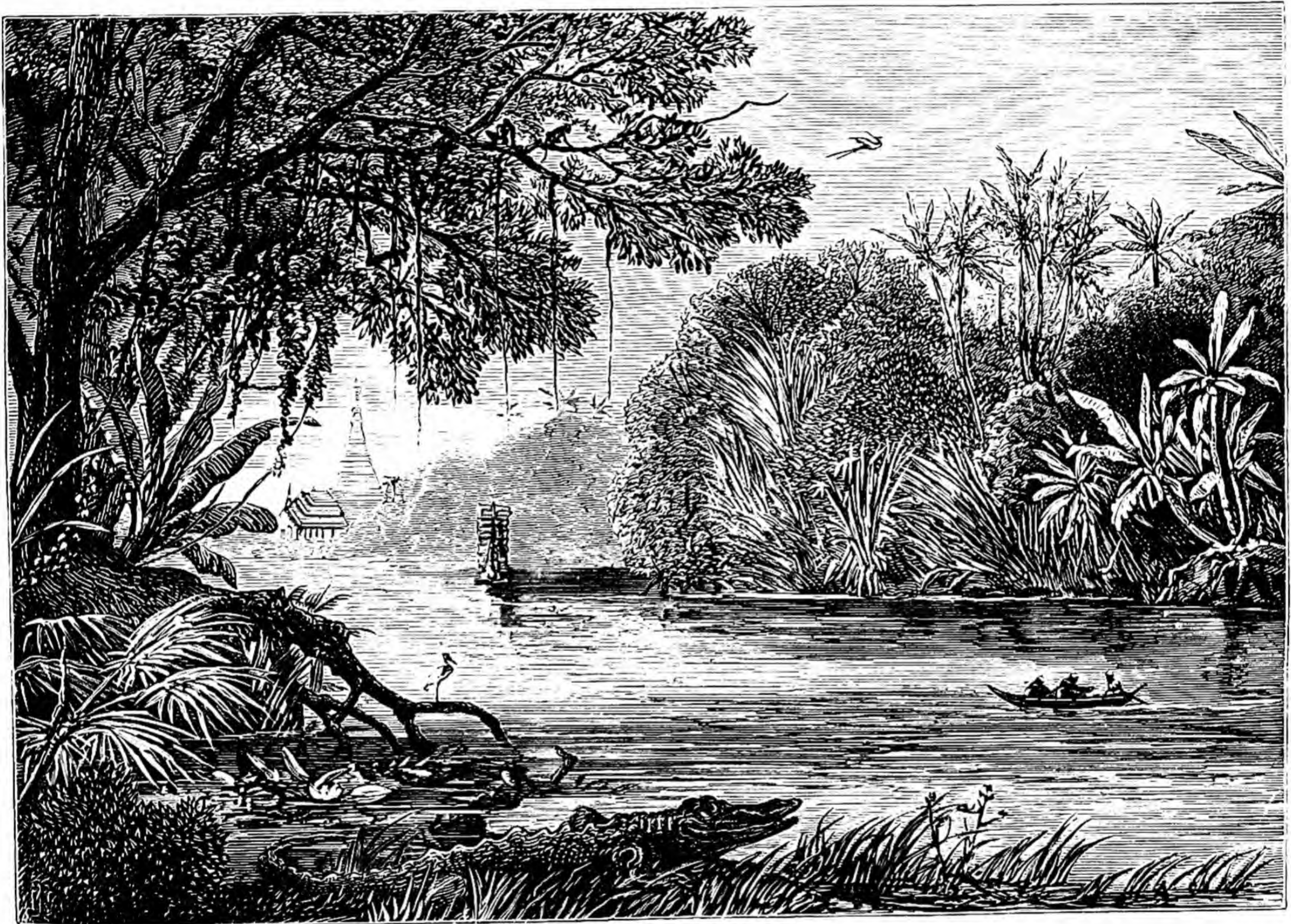
VIEW IN PEGU, BRITISH BURMAH.

river, which forms the main entrance into the ancient empire of Ava, is really a British river. Burmah is intersected by other rivers, such as the Kyen-dwen, Sittang, and Salween, all of which run towards the Indian Ocean. The Salween, like the Irrawaddy, forms a huge delta at its mouth, which it overflows during the rainy season, but in its upper portion it rushes through magnificent defiles. It is, however, owing to the frequent obstacles in its channel, practically useless as a highway into the interior.

The Province of Burmah, Birma, or "the empire of Ava," was at one time much more extensive than it is at present. In early times the kingdoms of Ava and Pegu contended for the mastery, but by 1752 the latter had obtained the upper hand. However, soon after, the founder of the last dynasty rose, and subduing the Peguans, incorporated



their country with his own, and his successors continued to extend its influence and bounds until the year 1822, when they came into collision with the British. The result of the war which ensued was the imposition of a heavy fine on the Burmese, and the surrender by them of a great part of their country, in addition to the sovereign rights which they claimed over Assam and several neighbouring petty states. In 1852, the insolence of the Burmese Court to our representative, the outrages of the people and officials on British seamen, and their general hostility to us, brought on a second war, which,



VIEW ON THE RIVER IRRAWADDY, BURMAH.

though like the first, not altogether one continuous success for the British, resulted so far disastrously to the Burmese that they lost the cities of Pegu (p. 112) and the whole of that province, which was accordingly formally annexed to India, and as part of British Burmah became henceforward an integral part of the Empire. The war had also this secondary effect, that it deprived the Burmese of any seaports, the whole of the coast-lying country being under our sway, only the inland or rolling hilly country being Burmah proper.

Since that date—in 1867—permission was obtained for British steamers to navigate Burmese waters; and to Bhamo, accordingly, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company ran a fortnightly steamer. The late king also showed considerable interest in the development of



the commercial resources of his country, by assisting various expeditions despatched to endeavour to open up the trade with Western China *via* Burmah. But, subsequently, the evil councillors who have always been abundant at Mandalay, the capital, quite obtained the upper hand. The old king died in October, 1878; his successor, Theebaw, a young man of twenty, indulged in such a wild orgie of drunkenness and murder, that it was found necessary to withdraw the British Resident from his court, and afterwards to dethrone him, and, on the 26th of February, 1886, to formally annex his kingdom.

The present Province of Burmah, including its tributary states, comprises about 277,000 square miles, and a population roughly estimated at between six and seven millions. In the northern part of the country the inhabitants are chiefly Singphos, Shans, and other half-wild tribes; the eastern districts, or Shan states (p. 123), are peopled by tribesmen who only acknowledge the Mandalay Government under protest; while, lopped of these quasi-independent parts, Burmah altogether does not contain more than 132,000 square miles, with a population of 5,000,000, scattered over "a varied surface of rolling upland, interspersed with alluvial basins and sudden ranges of hills," the country sloping upwards from the coast until it reaches the snowy highlands of the north, which contribute so many of the rivers which drain the region described, and where alluvial tracts are rare.

#### PRODUCTS.

Take it as a whole, Upper Burmah is not so fertile as the lower-lying maritime tracts of Lower Burmah, but on the uplands rice of many different kinds, maize, millet, wheat, various kinds of pulse, indigo, cotton, and tobacco flourish. But the sugar-cane, which has from time immemorial been known to the Burmese, is not much cultivated, although the climate seems particularly well suited for its growth. Most of their sugar—of a coarse, but cheap, quality—is made from the juice of the Palmyra palm, which is abundant in the country south of the capital. The tea-plant is indigenous, and is cultivated by the wild tribes who live at a distance from Mandalay; but the hlapet, or pickled tea, which is a favourite Burman relish, seems obtained from an entirely different plant—the *Eleodendron persicum*. Mangoes, oranges, citrons, pine-apples, custard apples, plantains, jacks, papayas, yams, and sweet potatoes are grown. Onions are less common, but capsicum, which, after salt, is the most common condiment in the country, is grown everywhere. The varied surface of the country yields an equally varied flora. There are but few deciduous trees, but owing to the plentiful moisture and the warmth of the atmosphere, General Fyche notices that the plains are during the greatest part of the year enamelled with a most exuberant vegetation and flowers of the brightest hues, while the mountains are clothed to their tops "with perennial foliage of endless variety, bright with the verdure of perpetual spring." It is also curious to find on the plains and on low hills extra-tropical plants, which only appear on the opposite coast, and in India generally on the mountains, and at an elevation of several thousand feet, and consequently in a much lower temperature. This cannot be attributed—as has been done—to the moisture of the climate; for the same peculiar moisture of tropical and temperate



forms of vegetation occurs in Upper Burmah, where the rainfall is much less, and the atmosphere drier also than in Bengal.\* All the trees found in India flourish in Burmah, and though with the loss of Pegu the Burmese were deprived of their finest forests of teak, yet fine timber trees are still abundant. Among the most graceful of these is the *Amherstia nobilis*, peculiar to Pegu. It grows to a height of forty feet, and is beautiful in the extreme, its slender pendulous branches being covered with bright green foliage, "draperied with large pea-blossomed-shaped flowers of scarlet and gold, which hang down from its graceful arches in tassels more than a yard long." Dr. Wallich considers that when this tree is in foliage and blossom it is one of the most superb objects which can be imagined. "It is unequalled in the flora of the East, and I presume not surpassed in magnificence and elegance in any part of the world." The fragrant gold-coloured blossom of the Champac (*Michelia champaca*), with which the Burmese and Indian women deck their hair, but the strong aromatic scent of which is disagreeable to bees, is another favourite ornament of Burmese gardens. The *Mesua*, or Gungu, is another tree which readily attracts the eye of a new comer, and though the palm order comprises some twenty species, excepting the cocoa-nut, the Areca (*A. catechu*), and the Palmyra (*Borassus flabelliformis*), few of them are very widely distributed.

The Buddhist sacred books are for the most part written on the leaves of the *Corypha* palm, while, as already noted, sugar is extracted from the veinous sap of the Palmyra. "The mode of obtaining the sap is by crushing the young inflorescence, and amputating the upper half; the lower is then tied to a leaf-stalk, and has an earthen pot attached to its end, which gradually fills with sap, and is removed every morning; when replaced, a fresh slice is cut from the wounded end of the inflorescence, an operation which is repeated every day until the whole of the raceme is sliced away. In procuring the sugar exactly the same process is followed, but the inside of the receiver is powdered with lime, which prevents fermentation taking place; the juice is afterwards boiled down, and finally dried by exposure to the sun in little baskets, and in this form is sold in Burmah under the name of tan-lyet. The female tree produces three or four times as much sap as the male, and a good healthy one is said to furnish some three quarts a day, which is continued for about five months." Pine-apples are so plentiful that in early morning on the roads leading to Rangoon, carts laden with them like turnips in England may be seen wending their way to market, in which they are sold at the rate of four for a penny, or sometimes even more cheaply. Of the plantain there are at least thirty varieties, some of which are used as a dessert fruit, and others cooked in various ways as a vegetable. The famous durian (Vol. IV., p. 255) will not grow in Upper Burmah, but before the annexation of Pegu the Kings of Burmah used to have this fruit despatched to them from Martaban by horse post. In that country it is as great a favourite as in Malaysia, and its warmest friends indignantly deny that it is so notoriously evil-odoured, except when it putrefies, as it does very rapidly after being completely ripe. Bamboos of many varieties are found, and are so valuable that the Bhatoos, one of the hill tribes

\* Mason: "The Natural Productions of Burmah" (1850); Kurtz: *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1874); Colquhoun: "Across Chryse" (1883), and "Among the Shans" (1885); Colquhoun and Hallett: "Report on the Railway Connection of Burmah and China" (1887); &c.



of India, offer worship to it as the impersonation or representative of the deity of the forest. But of all the forest products of Burmah, the teak (*Tectonia grandis*) is the most valuable, both for home use and as an article of export. There are a great number of varieties, but most probably they all belong to the same botanical species. It comes to maturity in about eighty years, when for eighty or ninety feet it will average a girth of twelve to sixteen feet. It does not grow in large clumps, but is scattered through the forest in the proportion of about one teak-tree to four hundred other trees. In the teak forests proper the proportion is about one in three hundred, but confined to certain localities, where, as noted by Dr. McClelland, it constitutes the prevailing tree for a few hundred yards, "seldom for a mile continuously." \* In 1875-76 the area of the teak forests reserved by the Government of Pegu was 335,880 acres, and the products of them delivered at the central depôts during that year was 46,597 tons, which realised at auction the average of £3 18s. per ton. In all, the total amount of teak exported from the Burmese ports was in the year mentioned 162,164 tons. Iron-wood (*Inga*), Engghyeng (*Shorea*), ebony, &c., are also obtained, and from two varieties of *Dipterocarpus* wood-oil is extracted. A triangular excavation is made in the bole of the tree, and on a fire being lighted therein the oil begins to flow freely into an earthen vessel placed to receive it. A single tree will yield from thirty to forty gallons in a season without injury.

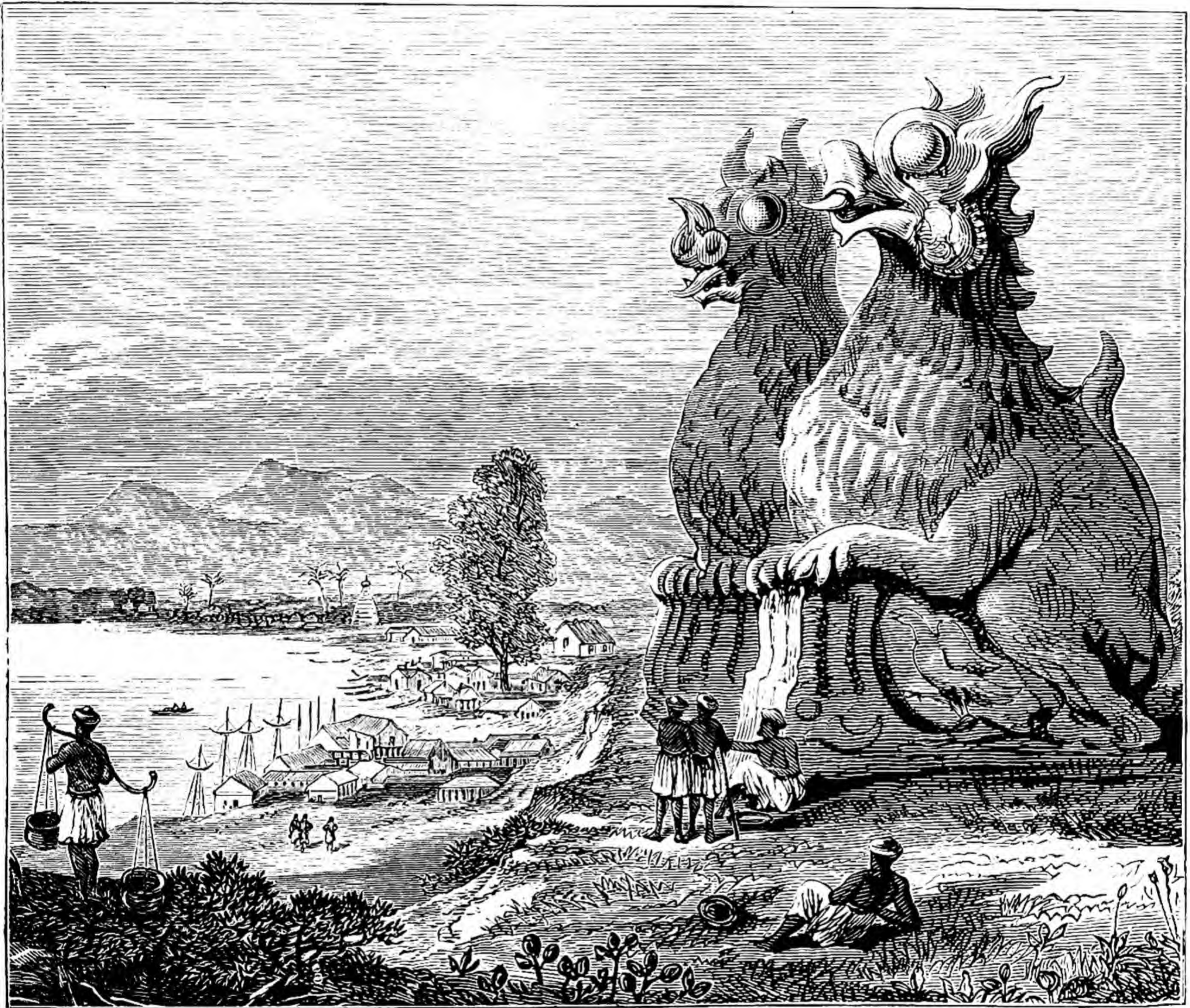
Catechu is the inspissated brown juice obtained by decoction and evaporation from the heart wood of *Mimosa catechu*, and is exported in considerable quantity for the use of tanners and dyers, and also for the adulteration of various articles of commerce, among others tea. The shellac and varnish used by the Burmese in their lacquer-ware manufacture are also obtained in these forests, and exported in small quantities.

Iron has been worked in the country from the earliest times; and as coal has been discovered in various places, the materials for mining industry are in existence. Tin is worked with success, and gold, silver, bismuth, nitre, amber, jade, galena, copper, plumbago, antimony, &c., exist in some abundance. Sulphuret of antimony has been worked, though without much profit; and the manufacture of salt, which was at one time a considerable industry, is now partially abandoned, English salt of a better quality being imported much more cheaply. This imported salt is brought as ballast for the rice-ships, and finds its way to Upper Burmah and into China and the Shan States *via* Bhamo, and causes the Chinese in their turn to bring to Bhamo their manufactures to offer in exchange. Long before the American oil-wells were discovered "Rangoon earth oil," or petroleum, was known in commerce, and it is still utilised for burning and for the manufacture of candles from the paraffine extracted from the crude oil. The candles are used locally, but considerable quantities of the refined petroleum are exported to Calcutta and the Straits of Malacca. The wells are situated on a plateau about sixty miles beyond our frontier, and each yields from 250 to 1,400 lbs. daily, the estimated returns from all of them being something like 12,000 tons per annum. The oil, when first taken out of the well, is of the consistence of cream, greenish in colour, and of strong, pungent, aromatic odour. The wells are private property, and, General Fytche tells us, have been in the

\* "Report on the Teak Forests of Pegu" (1854); Bryce: *Proceedings of the Roy. Geog. Soc.*, August, 1886.



possession of the same families for many years. They do not allow interlopers to dig any wells in the vicinity; and by mutual agreement no well can be sold or mortgaged except to a well-owner. The Government used formerly to exact a royalty of five per cent. on the value of the produce, but this varied in amount according to the caprice or exigencies of the reigning king. The precious stones of Burmah are chiefly the ruby and sapphire, found



CARVED FIGURES ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER IRRAWADDY, BURMAH.

by sinking pits in the district sixty or seventy miles north-east from the capital. One of the many titles of the King of Burmah was "Lord of the Rubies," and a fine specimen of this precious gem was, next to the possession of a white elephant, one of that monarch's most valued treasures. Some of the finest rubies known have been obtained within his territories; and it is believed that in the Royal Treasury there were stones far surpassing anything which the eyes of the outer world have as yet lighted on. The Crown laid claim to the produce of the ruby mines, and all finds that exceeded the value of £10 were sent to the Treasury. It may therefore be understood that not a great number of



rubies of that price were allowed to come before the eyes of the officials, it being decidedly to the profit of the finder to break a large one into two or three pieces, and thus be able to keep it for himself. The Yu or jade mines were worked by private individuals, each of whom paid a licence for this privilege, and was entitled to all he unearthed. Momien, in the Chinese province of Yun-nan, used at one time to have almost a monopoly of the jade manufacture, and to this day many of the smaller articles are produced in that city.

Roaming through the Burmese forests are the elephant and the one and two horned species of rhinoceros. The tiger, the leopard, the wild hog, several species of deer, and many of the more familiar animals of India, are also often met with; and in the Irrawaddy lives a species of dolphin (*Orcella*) corresponding to, but different from, the "soosoo" (*Platanista*) of the Ganges. The birds are very numerous, and comprise, among others, the peacock and various species of ibis, pheasant, partridge, and quail. In the waters numerous forms of fish abound.\* The buffalo, ox, and horse are used as beasts of burden. Elephants are reserved for the use of the king; while it is a piece of familiar knowledge to all the world that in Burmah, as in Siam, an albino form of that pachyderm is so highly valued that it is kept at court in state befitting a prince of the blood royal. Dogs, cats, goats, and sheep are seen, but as they are neglected, it need not surprise us that they are of a poor description. The camel is unknown, and the only asses in the country are those brought from China.

#### GOVERNMENT, TRADE, AND INDUSTRY.

The king ruled as an absolute monarch, but justice was, on the whole, fairly administered (for the East); and, contrary to the wont in such countries, women, though occupying a degraded position in Burmah, were permitted access to the courts of law in their own names. Bribery and extortion, however, prevailed, as might be expected from the system adopted, for few Burmese officials received fixed salaries. The higher dignitaries were paid by the assignment of land or forced labour, and the lower by what they could make in the way of bribes, perquisites, and other pickings, which made the administration of the law and the sale of "justice" so lucrative a trade in Burmah. This system was, however, not peculiar to King Theebaw's domain, but prevailed to even a worse extent in nearly all the neighbouring countries. The police were exceedingly incompetent, the punishments cruel in the extreme, and, as many prisoners in our wars can testify, torture was a common accompaniment of prison life, and was resorted to by the gaolers, who are generally condemned criminals, and rank among the outcasts of society, in order to force their victims to pay fines to procure milder treatment.†

The revenue was collected mainly by extortion; and though the mode of assessment was vexatious in the extreme, the result was in no corresponding degree lucrative to the Court. Poll-taxes, taxes on agriculture, on fruit-trees, tobacco-land, on teak-forests, on

\* Day: *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* (1869-70), and "Fishes of India" (1875-78); Blyth: *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1875); Anderson: "Scientific Results of the Yun-nan Expedition" (1880), &c.

† For a fuller account of the habits of the Burmese see "The Peoples of the World," Vol. IV., pp. 150-155.



petroleum-springs, on the fisheries, on salt-manufactories, on the eggs of the green turtle, and on edible swallows'-nests were among those commonly exacted. But, in addition, extraordinary imposts for the enrichment of favourites or to supply the exhausted exchequer of the king were frequently resorted to, and could not be detailed in any systematic schedule of Burmese taxation. The civilisation of the country was in 1885 stationary, if not retrograding, and little money was spent on public works, the main extravagance in that direction being for the repair of the Buddhist temples, on one of which more than £40,000 was lavished in gilding and general decoration. The Burmese commerce finds its way through Lower Burmah to the sea, and consists of the articles mentioned; but a considerable amount of goods pass overland to China, the Ava cotton being in special demand among the Celestials, while, on the other hand, the Chinese silk is valued in Burmah.\* But in the northern part of Burmah most of the trade is carried on at fairs in connection with the religious festivals. All commerce in Burmah is, or was, much impeded by the want of a proper circulating medium. There is no coined money, and the pieces of silver which are used in lieu thereof are so frequently alloyed, and in all cases of such indeterminate weight, that much trouble and expense are continually incurred in getting them weighed and assayed. For small payments lead is employed. Money brings from 25 to 60 per cent. interest, according to the character of the security for its repayment; and altogether the commercial state of the country is very low. The people excel in several arts. Their architecture bears the impress of India, and is chiefly practised in wood, though the elaborate carving and the rich gilding, which are carried to an extraordinary extent, give the houses an appearance of splendour out of all proportion to their rather flimsy character. The finest buildings are those devoted to religious purposes, and of these there is a prodigious number; but the private erections are usually not very imposing, owing to the people's prejudices against any one walking over their heads preventing the architect from rearing his handiwork higher than one storey. Cotton is woven on a rude loom; and though the fabric is durable, the Burmese women have never yet attained to the skill of their Indian sisters in the textile arts. Silk cloth is manufactured from raw material, either raised within their own borders or imported from China,† from which country most of the porcelain used in Burmah comes. They smelt iron, but not being able themselves to prepare steel, the few common articles of cutlery—such as swords, spears, knives, carpenters' tools, &c.—made by them are of metal brought from Bengal. The late king, conceiving that the Burmese defeats during the two wars with the British were owing to the want of cannon on his part, brought all manner of European and other adventurers to his capital to cast these lethal weapons for him; and it is said that the number and variety of inefficient artillery possessed by his successor were remarkable. But it is in the jewellery art that Burmese skill is chiefly displayed. Many of their ornaments of *repoussé* gold and silver are very tasteful, and their cups and similar vessels are often executed with much power. Yet the tools employed are few and rough. The bellows used by jewellers and workers in metals other than gold and silver General Fytche

\* For trade routes to China, see Coryton: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLV. (1875), pp. 229-249; and for the proposed railway Mr. Colquhoun's "Report" and his "Burma and the Burmans" (1885).

† Orthodox Buddhists, from their horror of destroying life, look upon sericulture with abhorrence. Hence from time immemorial those practising it have resided in villages by themselves—outcasts, holding little intercourse with their neighbours.



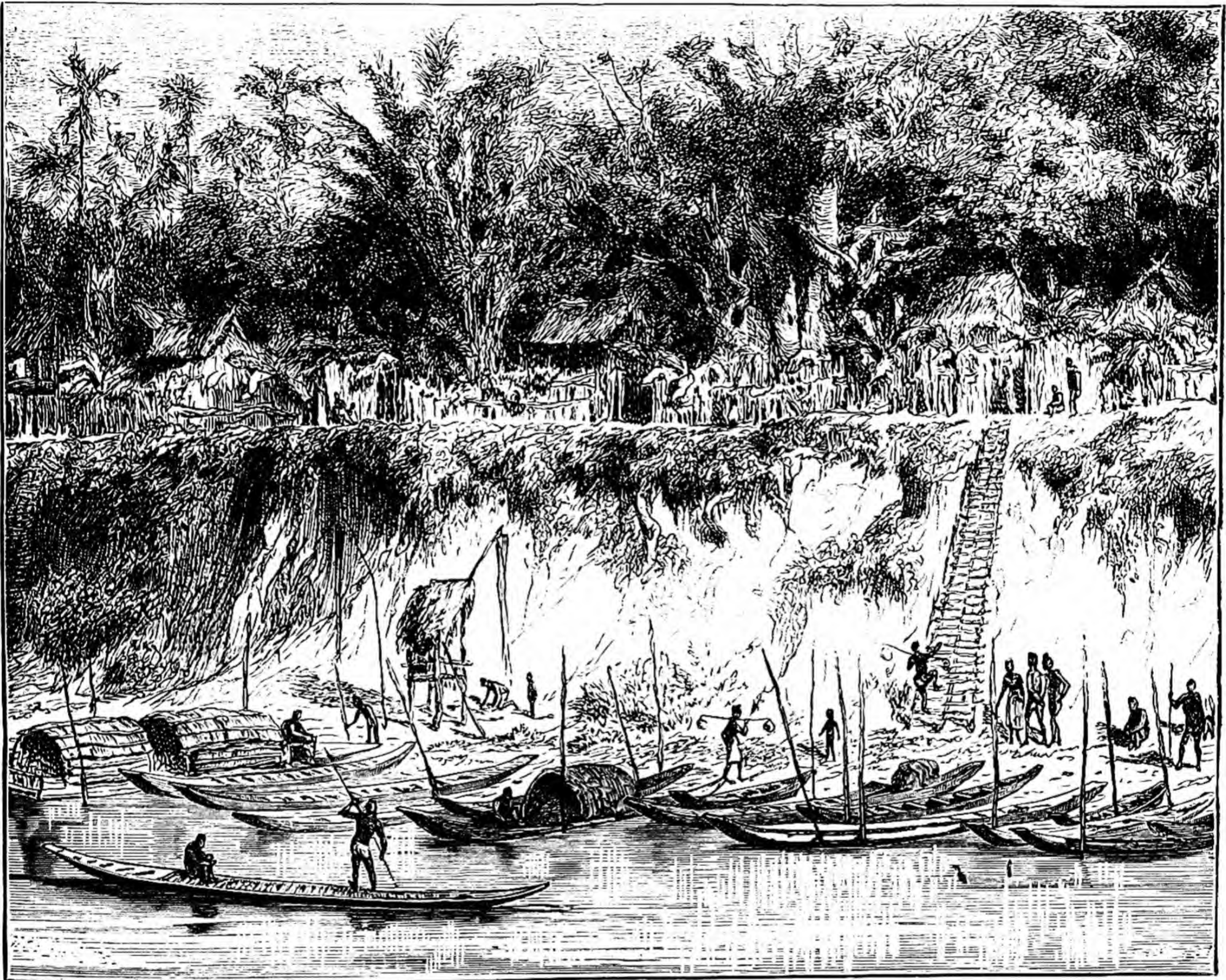
describes as consisting of a couple of wooden cylinders, their diameter being proportioned to the force required. These cylinders are fitted with pistons, alternately "raised and depressed by one or two men, and the air, forced out at an aperture in the lower end of the apparatus, is conducted into the fire by an iron tube." By means of these simple bellows they are enabled to melt the hardest metals. Ivory and wood-carving are also executed in clear and bold *alto relievo*, and in most artistic designs; yet the sister art of painting is in Burmah at a very low ebb. Bell-casting is an art which the Burmese take a great pride in, and in which they have accordingly attained a considerable degree of perfection. In 1796 the largest bell in the world, with the exception of the one presented by the Empress Anne to the Moscow Cathedral, was cast at Mengoon. Their gongs are also excellent, and possess a much finer and deeper tone than those made by the Chinese. The Burmese, though not artists in the proper sense of the term, have a keener sense of the harmonies of colour and design than most of the neighbouring natives, and on their best lacquered ware—made of fine cane and bamboo-work, covered with a red and yellow and black or yellow lacquer—fanciful and sometimes elegant designs are traced.

#### CITIES, ETC.

Mandalay, the capital of Upper Burmah, is a city only thirty years old, and is laid out in a square, each side of which is a little over a mile in length, and is entirely enclosed by a crenelated brick wall 26 feet high and 3 feet thick, as well as by strong earthworks, and by buttresses protruding from the wall, at intervals of about 200 feet. The walls are pierced by twelve gates, each surmounted by a pavilion, or notch, with double or triple roofs, and 60 feet from the wall a deep moat, 100 feet in width, has been dug, and is always kept full of water. The moat is crossed by four bridges, but being made of wood, and easily raised at the approach of an enemy, there is no provision made for their protection except from the wall. In round numbers the houses inside and outside the walls will be about 12,000, and the inhabitants about 60,000. The former palace is the centre of the city, and is strongly protected by brick walls and a teak stockade. In the city there was always a considerable garrison. But the Burmese army, though much improved as a fighting machine since the time we last encountered it, was in 1885 still contemptible. There was—as among the Easterns, and especially among the Mongols—no distinction between the civil and military services. "Treasurers and judges were expected to take the command of armies. The Burmese army comprised the whole population of adult males, or, rather, as much of the population as could be brought together by a forced conscription. Sometimes they were collected from particular provinces, townships, or districts, but on great occasions levies were made of the whole population. The officials then became generals. Such an army was a mere rabble. It was without any discipline or military virtue. It was formidable only to the petty tribes and natives in the neighbourhood." The late king's father had occasionally employed Europeans to drill his army, but, as circumstances proved, a very small amount of success attended his efforts in this direction. Ava was for a long time the capital of the Empire, and gave its name to the country, Ava being formerly much more familiar as the designation of the region we are now describing than Burmah.



But for many years past it has been almost deserted. Pagham must in earlier times have been a fine city, but at present consists almost solely of a vast area of ruined temples, chiefly of the cruciform vaulted type.\* There are several other cities, but none of them—with the exception of Bhamo—are of much importance, the chief towns having always, in modern times at least, been on the sea-coast, and therefore under British rule. The Burmese capital has been often changed. The first mentioned in Burmese history is



VIEW OF BASSAC, LAOS.

Tagoung, founded 500 years B.C. Afterwards the seat of government was at Prome, two towns of the name of Pagham, Panya, Tsagain, Ava, Toungoo, Pegu, Amarapura, and other cities, and once it even threatened to be at Arakan.†

#### CLIMATE AND DISEASES.

As these two questions more nearly concern the European temporarily or for a length of time requiring to reside in Burmah, we may devote the last of our notes on the

\* Yule: "Narrative of the Mission to Ava under Sir Arthur Phayre" (1859). † Fytche: "Burmah, Past and Present," Vol. I., p. 30; Scott: "The Burman" (1880), and "Burmah, Past and Present" (1885).



country to them. On the coast there are only two seasons, the wet and the dry. The former depends on the prevalence of the north-east and the latter on the south-west monsoon. In Upper Burmah—that is, the country independent until 1886—no rain falls, and there are three seasons, the hot, cold, and rainy. In May or June there are showers, but it is not until the autumn that the heavy rains come. Then from the middle of October till early in April the weather is cool. The interval, however, between April and August is hot—the thermometer often rises to  $85^{\circ}$ , and even  $100^{\circ}$ —rarely above the latter limit, but just as rarely falling below the former. Even the coast region (Lower Burmah) General Fyche considers, taking it all the year round, to be much cooler than Bengal. The south-west monsoon sets in earlier, and hence the intense heat which immediately precedes the commencement of the rains is shorter. A sultry night is a rarity, and in the lower portion of the provinces, owing to their proximity to the sea, there is generally a breeze. Even further inland the natural formation of the country in valleys enables the residents to benefit by these winds. When the rain does fall it pours with no niggard downfall. In 1870, at the sea-coast town of Maulmain, 184.6 inches fell—59.2 inches in the month of August. On the 27th May, 1857, 12.97 inches were recorded. “The rain descends from the land skies,” writes the late Chief Commissioner of Burmah, “in dense sheets, accompanied with vivid lightning and crashing peals of thunder, and during the paroxysm of the monsoon has an appearance as if Heaven in its justice had deemed fit to immerse in a second cataclysm an impenitent world.” In Upper Burmah drought is sometimes experienced, but happily famines, such as are too familiar to many parts of India, are unknown. Those which have occurred are ascribed more to devastating wars and political causes than to soil and climate. Snow, it is almost needless to say, is unknown, but at the commencement of the south-west monsoon storms of hail are not unfrequent. On the higher ranges of mountains frost is, however, experienced during the middle of the north-east monsoon. The climate, though trying, like all parts of the tropics, is not particularly dangerous. The regiments stationed both on the coast and on the frontier enjoy excellent health. The complaints most prevalent are fever, dysentery, and liver diseases, maladies from which the natives themselves are not free, though their sturdy and vigorous appearance proves that Burmah is not a land of pestilence. From a sanitary point of view, the soldiers’ worst enemy in this, as in other parts of the East, is the fatal facility for indulging in insobriety. “It’s a fine country; lots to drink, and you are always dry,” was the encomium passed on it by Private Thomas Atkins.\*

#### THE SHAN STATES.

Between Munipoor on the east and Yun-nan on the west, south of lat.  $24^{\circ}$ , to the borders of Siam and Cambodia, are a number of wild tribes, who, though owing allegiance

\* Laurie: “Our Burmese Wars and Relations with Burma” (1880); Gouger: “Two Years’ Imprisonment in Burmah” (1862); Winter: “Six Months in Burmah” (1858); Forbes: “Burmah” (1879); Anderson: “Expedition to East Yunnan *via* Bhamo” (1871); “Mandalay and Momien” (1876); Trant: “Two Years in Ava” (1827); Vincent: “The Land of the White Elephant” (1873); McMahon: “The Karens and the Golden Chersonese” (1876); Bastian: “Reisen in Birma” (1866); Ligandet: “Life and Legend of Gaudama” (1879); and the works of Sangermano, Cox, Symes, Snodgrass, Wayland, Canning, Crawford, Burney, and others quoted.



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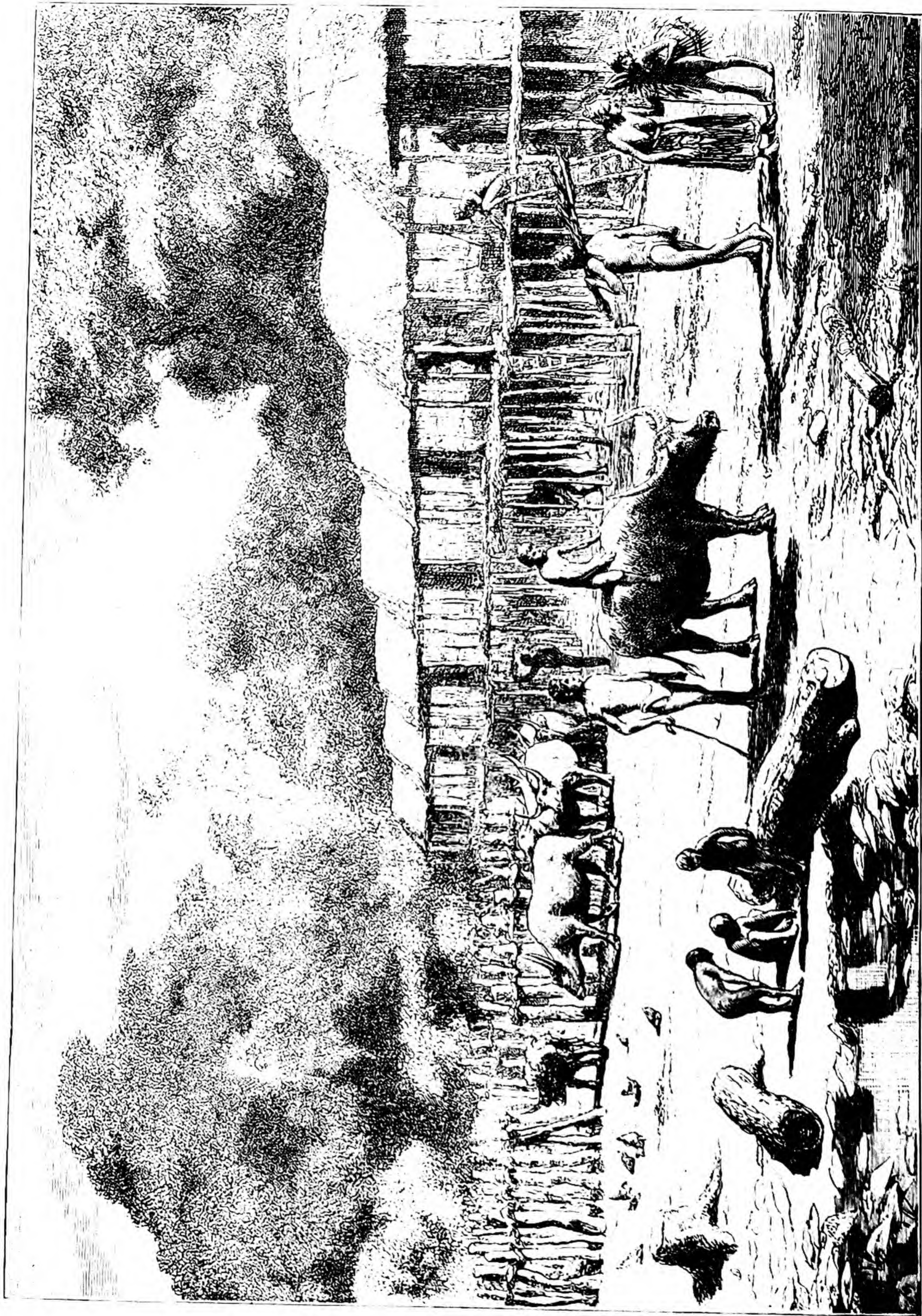
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SCENE IN A VILLAGE IN THE LAOS COUNTRY.



either to Burmah or Siam, are really independent. They are known as the Shan States, a term which includes much of the Laos country, partially under the authority of the King of Anam. Xieng Mai, the capital of Laos, is said to contain 50,000 inhabitants. It stands on a plain on the right bank of the Menam, 500 miles north of Bangkok, the capital of Siam. The other villages and towns (pp. 121, 124) are unimportant. The Karens also inhabit a mountainous country, partially independent. Western Karennee has asked to be annexed to Lower Burmah, owing to the assumption of authority on the part of the Burmese over it; but for the present the people are independent.\*

#### LOWER BURMAH.

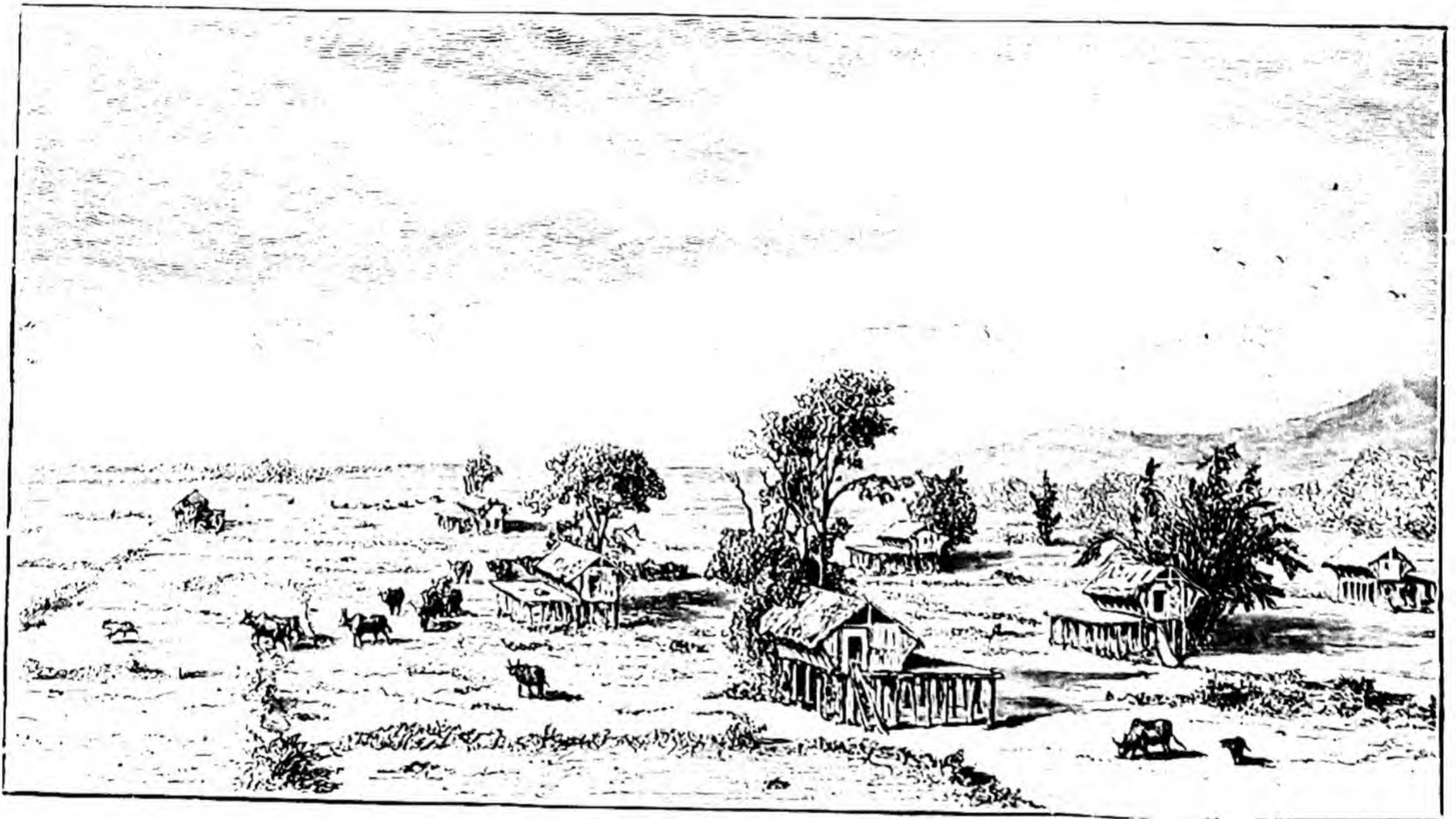
The way this province of India was acquired has already been explained; until the kingdom of Burmah was annexed, this province was known as British Burmah; to distinguish it from the Upper—or formerly independent—section it is now termed Lower Burmah. The part of the country intersected by the mouth of the Irrawaddy is flat, but the south, east, and part of the north are more or less mountainous, some portions of the country being so rugged as to render cultivation impossible. Tenasserim—one of the three divisions, Arakan and Pegu being the other two—is divided from Siam by a high range of hills. Blue Mountain, one of the peaks on the northern frontier of the province, rises to a height of 7,000 feet, and some of the other elevations throughout the country are not much less. For instance, the mountains of Tenasserim are about 5,000 feet high, and throughout their extent are covered with dense jungle, in which live no human beings. Indeed, a large part of the country is clothed with forest containing the teak and other timber-trees, which constitute a great portion of the riches of the country. Rivers also intersect it everywhere, some of them navigable for considerable distances; but the population is small compared with the extent and capabilities of the country. In the year 1881 their number was placed at 3,736,771, scattered over an area comprising something like 88,500 square miles. The great majority of these are Buddhists, the remainder being Mohammedans, Hindoos, Christians, and Pagans of various types. The province contained several towns, but only two of them have a population exceeding 10,000, Rangoon, the capital, containing, in 1881, over 134,000 people, though at the date of writing this census is believed to greatly under-estimate the number of inhabitants of the principal seaport of Burmah.† Under the British Government the country has rapidly increased in population, and its prosperity has been so great that no other province of India can compare with it. This is the best proof that our rule has been to the benefit of the natives. This they themselves acknowledge, though a few disaffected individuals in Rangoon and elsewhere, acting, it is believed, as the tools of the vain “Woongyees” of Upper Burmah, sometimes exhibit signs of desiring to disturb the peace. This, however, is not likely to be broken by any large number of the people. They know well that under the King of Burmah they enjoyed no such privileges, or an

\* O’Riley: “Journal of a Tour in Karennee” (1856).

† Lower Burmah credits India with a million of surplus revenue, while its exports are nearly eight millions sterling and its imports about a million less. The revenue of Upper Burmah is estimated at £665,000, and its frontier trade at £1,100,000.



approach to the comfort and freedom they now possess. Under their own rulers they were oppressed by rapacious viceroys, whose only thought was to fill their coffers. Torture was resorted to in all judicial difficulties, but, except in cases of treason or sacrilege, money could expiate even an offence so serious that not only the actual criminal but all his relations would have been made to share in the punishment. No man dared to grow rich, knowing that his poverty was his main safeguard from oppression and robbery. Thus in time trade languished, and industry was limited simply to provide for the worker's daily wants. So sensible were the Burmese of the difference between British and native rule that, in spite of the almost sacred regard they paid to their monarch and their country, many of them even before the annexation migrated across the frontier, so as to be under our protection.



VILLAGE IN THE INTERIOR OF LAOS.

The example of the British administration had even an influence on the king himself. At one time all officials, court favourites, and dependants were paid either by grants of revenue, or of land, or of the labour of the people living on these lands. But by-and-bye the chief ministers and inmates of the zenana were paid fixed salaries, a reform, however, which only made the king more absolute than ever, and did not much improve the condition of his subjects. Indeed, to improve the subject's condition was not an idea which often crossed the mind of a Burmese monarch. The first great principle on which his throne rested was that the people were his property, and as such he was entitled to their labour. Land in Burmah is so plentiful that it has never been looked upon as property in itself, the cultivator's labour being the valuable commodity. He sat on the soil as the chattel of the king, and his business was to raise produce for him, the balance remaining after the Government officials had taken their shares being considered a kind of gratuity on the sovereign's part to his lieges.



In this way the revenue of the king was calculated to reach over £800,000, in addition to various perquisites and exactions the value of which it is impossible to exactly calculate. Slavery also existed. Some of the slaves were hereditary bondmen, such as those allotted to serve in the pagodas; and others were debtors, who served until they paid the uttermost farthing. But there are still villages of outcasts, who live apart from the rest of the world, and with whom few people will hold much intercourse, whose lot is almost as bad. Lepers, deformed and mutilated people, all incurables, executioners, coffin-makers, and others employed in the disposal of the dead are classed as such.

The productions of Lower Burmah consist of rice, cotton, tobacco, teak, and the articles already noticed in our account of Upper Burmah; and in addition the enterprise of the English manufacturer has resulted in the establishment of several rice-husking and saw-mills throughout the province, in addition to various others for the manufacture of silk and cotton goods. Education on the English plan has not made much progress, but there are attached to the Buddhist monasteries numerous, cheap, and fairly efficient schools of a kind; while Christianity, if rejected by the Buddhists, is, through the exertion of the American missionaries, making headway among the wild Karens. The provinces are ruled by a Chief Commissioner stationed at Rangoon, who is assisted by a number of deputies and other officials. Altogether the country is in a flourishing condition, and may be looked upon as one of the portions of India which not only pays the cost of governing, but actually yields a surplus for imperial purposes, though large sums are spent on railways, roads, and other public works. Rangoon, the capital, lies twenty-six miles up the Rangoon River, and at the height of the rice season is a busy place, owing to the presence of so many foreign ships taking in cargo. The town runs for about a mile along the river-bank, and above three miles inland. The principal thoroughfare, and the one in which are the Government offices and the most imposing shops and dwelling-houses, is "The Strand," a broad macadamised esplanade running along the river-side. The town from the river presents a pleasant aspect. Its teak and bamboo houses are shaded with thick tropical vegetation; while the English cantonment, the two or three European churches, and "several large pagodas with gilded richly-ornamented spires," give a semi-Oriental, semi-British aspect to this town of the far East. "Beyond the city," writes Mr. Vincent, "we see a jungle of palms and bananas and bamboos stretching away, a wavy sea of green, to the very horizon itself." Though the country round the city is of the usual nature of the delta of the Irrawaddy (p. 113)—low, sandy, and muddy, and subject to tremendous floods in the rainy season—it is not unhealthy. The town itself is laid down in streets—mostly broad, macadamised, and clean—running at right angles to each other; and the European houses are in the majority of cases raised on piles, and built of plain teak boards with tile roofs. The native town or quarter Mr. Vincent, however, considers "very mean-looking, the huts there being of bamboo with palm-leaf-thatched covers." Maulmain is a town of about 12,000 people—Burmese, Chinese, Parsees, Armenians, Klings, Jews, Singhalese, and about a couple of hundred Europeans—almost hidden amid immense groves of cocoa-nut, palm, betel-nut, banana, papaya, bamboo, and other tropical vegetation. Timber is the great trade of the place. The teak-logs are hewn in the forests on the banks of the Salween River, and then, after being seasoned, floated down, sometimes for hundreds of



miles, to the town. A teak-log is not a light weight anywhere; in a tropical climate to handle it is a burden too great for men to bear. Accordingly, elephants are extensively employed in this occupation—drawing, stacking, and shifting the immense blocks of wood, some of which weigh two tons. “A log,” we are told by Mr. Vincent, “that forty coolies could scarcely move, an elephant will quietly lift upon his tusks, and holding it there with his proboscis, will carry it to whatever part of the yard he may be directed by his driver. They will also, using trunk, feet, and tusks, put the huge timber as evenly and correctly as one could wish. What surprised us most was to see the elephants select and pick out particular timbers from the centre of an indiscriminate stack or heap of more than a hundred simply at the command of the driver. The huge beasts are directed by the ‘mahouts,’ or drivers, by spoken orders, pressure of the feet on their necks, and the customary use of the ‘ankus,’ or elephant goad. It usually requires a year or a year and a half to teach them the ‘timber business,’ and when thoroughly taught they are worth from 500 rupees [£50] upwards, according to their abilities. We saw one, a venerable old fellow, nearly ten feet in height, for which the owner said he had refused an offer of 3,000 rupees. Sometimes an animal breaks his tusks, being forced to carry an excessive weight by a stupid or brutal driver, though the elephant knows his own power, and generally refuses to lift more than his tusks can safely bear; for if these should be broken off close to the head death would soon ensue: if only cracked, they are hooped about with iron bands, and are thus rendered serviceable for many years.” At one time most of the teak was purchased from the hill chiefs, who divided their allegiance between the Kings of Burmah and Siam; but of late the timber, having become scarce, has had to be sought for much further from the river banks. Disputes have also arisen between the rival chiefs as to the ownership of the land on which the logs were cut, and, in addition to caravans having been attacked and plundered, often two or three litigants appear to claim payment for the same log. The result of this state of matters formed a serious interference with the trade of Maulmain, once regarded as the most flourishing town in Lower Burmah.\* Bassein is an ancient seaport, the capital of a large and important district. Akyab, Arakan, Pegu (p. 112), Sittang, Martaban, and Tenasserim may be mentioned as other towns, all of which have, as tropical towns will have, an extremely family likeness. Where, in addition, these towns are British, the similarity of one to another is to a stranger still more marked, though of course long familiarity enables a resident to differentiate sharply between the pleasures and miseries of particular districts and stations.

\* Maulmain has been selected by MM. Colquhoun and Hallett as the Burmah terminus of the important railway communication between that province, Siam, and China, which they advocate. See “Report on the Railway Connection of Burmah and China, with Account of Exploration Survey” (London, 1887), pp. 16–21, and other sources of information cited there.



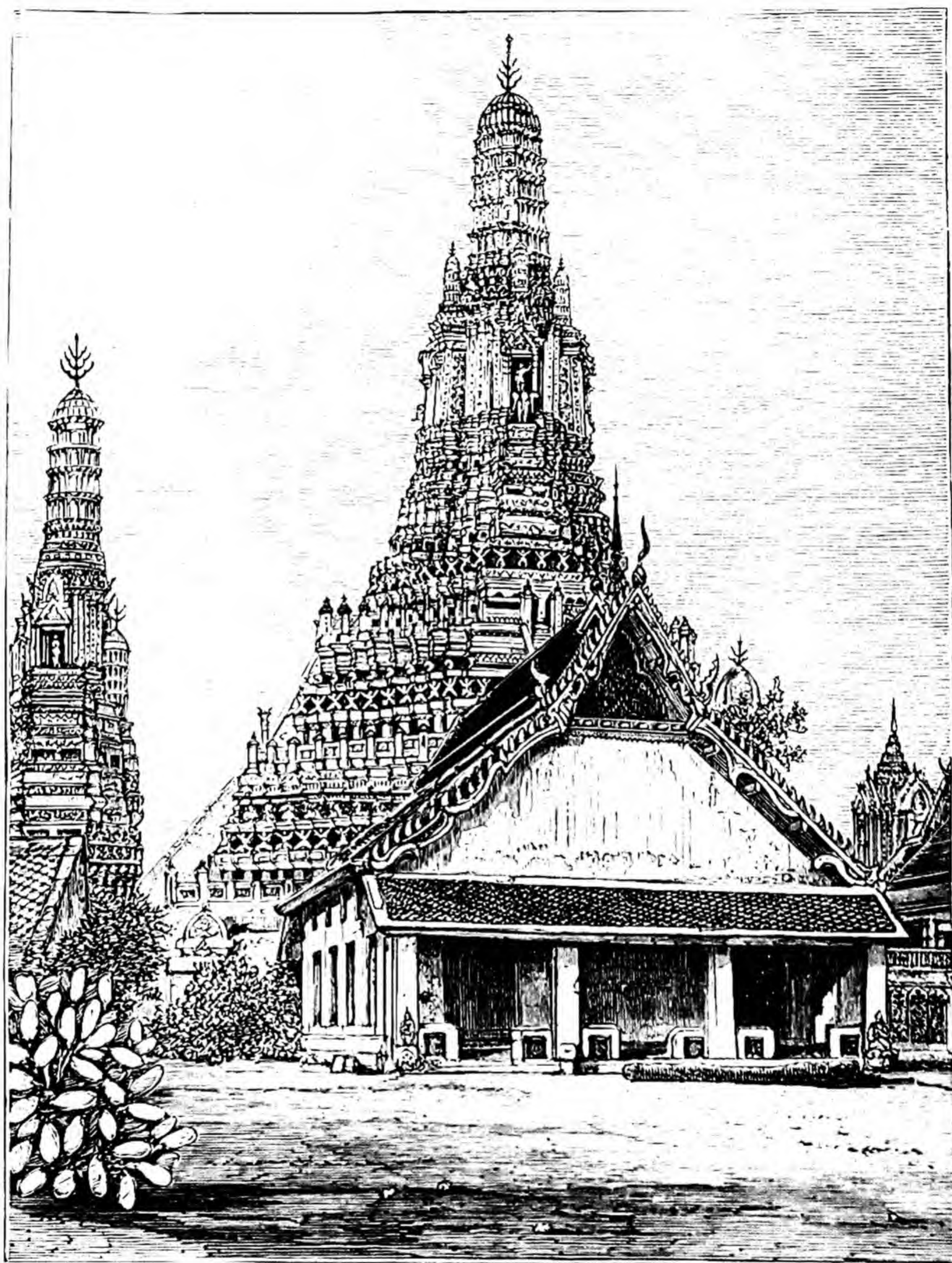
## CHAPTER VI.

## SIAM; CAMBODIA; ANAM; COCHIN-CHINA.

UNDER the name of Indo-China, Chen India, or Farther India, is comprised Burmah, Siam, Cochin-China, and the neighbouring petty chieftainships, principalities, and kingdoms, including Cambodia and Anam. China and India limit their extension to the north, while the Bay of Bengal, the Malay Peninsula—the Golden Chersonese of the ancients—the Gulf of Siam, and the China Sea bound them in other directions. Burmah we have already noticed. But Burmah, though in every respect to us more important than Siam, was until lately neither so prosperous nor on the way to such peaceful prosperity as the latter. Thai, or Muang Thai—the Free, or the Kingdom of the Free—consists of forty-one provinces, but except the northern part of the country, which is mountainous, Siam is really one great plain, intersected by two main rivers, to the overflow and silt of which it owes its present fertility, and in all likelihood its actual existence, just as Holland may be said to be born of the Rhine, and Egypt—so far as the delta is concerned—to be the child of the Nile. The chief of these rivers is the Menam, or Meinam, which, as in the case of the Tibetan Sanpoo, is a word simply meaning *the* river. Flowing from the mountains of Yun-nan, it falls, after a course of 800 miles, into the sea thirty miles below the city of Bangkok, it and its numerous tributaries draining a vast portion of the kingdom. But the Menam is not only the great artery and highway of Siam, but its inundations over some 12,000 square miles give fertility to the soil and ensure the success of the rice crop, and in the rich deposit which they leave behind it supplies a soil capable of yielding the finest crops with the slightest cultivation. Indeed, the whole valley of the river is one of the most fertile regions in the world. The same may be said of the lands adjoining the Mei-Kong, a river which flows for 1,600 miles through the eastern districts of the country. So grateful, indeed, is the soil, that though to this day no better tillage is given to it in many districts than simply to turn buffaloes into the fields to trample down the weeds and disturb the soil sufficiently to permit of the seed being deposited, and harrowed over by dragging thorny bushes over it, immense harvests are obtained. Under a better system of agriculture, introduced by Europeans, and through the exertions of the enlightened monarchs who have for some time ruled Siam, rice, sugar, and the usual tropical crops already noticed as the staples of Burmah are grown in such abundance as to afford material for a large export trade. But Siam is not only rich in an exuberant soil, in all crops which will grow in its warm climate, in jungles which yield teak, dye, and gum-woods, in forests full of wild animals, and rivers and creeks swarming with excellent fish, but precious stones, gold, and silver are also found in no small abundance. Copper, tin, lead, and iron are plentiful, and are worked by the Chinese, who in this, as in all the neighbouring countries, are the most industrious and enterprising of the inhabitants. That gold and silver are plentiful is proved by the extensive use made



of both metals in ornamental work. Vases, urns, and various "knick-knacks" for display or use are made of silver, with gold figures embossed on them, and sent all over the East, in which they possess a certain celebrity. Among their other arts, gold-beating



BUDDHIST WAT, OR TEMPLE, AT BANGKOK SIAM.

—the gold being among the most ductile known—iron-founding, the making of glass-ware, pottery, and the weaving of fine cloth may be included. For many years the Siamese have had a regular coinage, the tical, or bat, a silver coin worth about half-a-crown, and impressed with the figure of an elephant. Spanish dollars are, however, much in use, and of late years bronze money, coined in England, has displaced the numerous halfpenny



paper notes in circulation. The Royal Mint is provided with machinery of English manufacture, though all the work inside the building is done by Siamese artizans. The cannon foundry is also "run" by natives, but many of the enormous brass guns which are preserved inside the arsenal were originally cast under the direction of the Portuguese during the time they visited the country.

Bad legislation and the system of monopolies which his Siamese Majesty, like others of his Oriental brethren, loved, played such havoc with the commerce of the



GENERAL VIEW OF BANGKOK AND THE MENAM RIVER.

country, that it was not until 1855 that the once brisk trade of Bangkok began to revive. In that year Sir John Bowring framed a treaty of commerce with the Siamese king, providing for religious and commercial freedom, and, above all, giving the British traders permission to purchase goods directly from the dealer or producer without the interference of the king or any other person. The effect was soon visible. At Bangkok—the only port from which we have anything like accurate statistics, and the one almost alone visited by foreign ships—the value of the exports for 1885 was £1,572,788, while the imports were of the value of £1,138,338. Rice is the main article exported, but *agila*, or eagle-wood, much valued in the East for its perfume, gutta-percha, cardamoms, gamboge, pepper, teel-seed, bamboo, rattans, sugar, tobacco, sago, coffee, skins, guavas, mangoes, sapan-wood, rose-wood, and other timbers, and even the tusks of elephants,



which, though considered the property of the king, and therefore not allowed to be killed, are freely slain *sub rosa*, since the natives in the wilder parts of the country have discovered that there is a lucrative market for them among the foreign traders. Among the articles imported, various textile fabrics, hardware, and opium may be mentioned. But though the British trade with Siam is considerable, the direct commerce between our islands and that country is inconsiderable. Nevertheless, the number of British ships visiting Bangkok is vastly greater than that of any other nation. Even the Siamese vessels are fewer, while the Chinese junks, numerous as they are, do not quite equal the number of British merchantmen trading with the chief city of Siam. Forced labour for the benefit of the owners of the land interferes sadly with the internal prosperity and producing power of the country. Hence the soil, though as rich as any which the sun shines on, does not produce a great surplus, and in some places returns to the scant tillage of the peasant barely enough of food to support him and his feudal lord. The Chinese, not being subject to forced labour, have settled in the country in great numbers. It is they who own the large rice factories at the capital, in which the "paddy" is freed from the husk and packed for export. It is, again, the Chinese who are the most prosperous merchants, and whose floating shops along the river front strike the visitor as among the most ingenious arrangements for trade devised by an ingenious people. One side is left open to display goods; the other shelters the trader's family. When business is not brisk at the spot first chosen, the floating dwelling is simply unmoored, and floated up or down the river with the tide to a spot which seems to present a more favourable opening for trade. Nor are they backward in competing with the natives in more toilsome, but less money-making, occupations. The Siamese are not a race addicted to over-exertion. Timid, careless, gentle, almost passionless, idle, inconstant, exacting, and though not truthful when they find lying a useful protection, sincere, affectionate, witty, and unworldly, they are but children in the hands of the keen Chinese, who know no scruples, possess not a lazy bone in their lithe bodies, and are ready at any moment to sell themselves (or any one else) to gain a "pice." In Siam the male Siamese do not number more than 2,600,000, while the Chinese exceed 1,500,000. The rest of the population, which is calculated by Dr. Bastian to number in all under six millions and a half, is made up of Laotians, Malays, Cambodians, and Burmese from the province of Pegu—or Peguans, to be more precise. Of the inhabitants of Bangkok nearly one-half are Chinese, and, indeed, at Peking the country is considered to be one of the Emperor's tributary states, a theory borne out by the fact that Siam at one time sent presents—or, as the Celestials termed them, tribute—to China, though this was only an international courtesy, repaid by Siamese vessels being (until it was discontinued) admitted into Chinese ports duty free. Siam, on the other hand, claims to be the suzerain of the Malay Peninsula rajahs, of Tringganu, Kalantan, Patani, and Kedah, the Laotian princes of Xiengmai, Laptun, Lakhon, Phrë, Nan, Luang-Phra-Bang, and Muang-Lom; while Cambodia, being awkwardly situated between Siam on one side and Anam, or the Cochin-Chinese kingdom, on the other, prefers as a matter of policy to pay tribute to both. Indeed, the real limits of the kingdom are now difficult to trace, the borders being occupied by so many half-independent tribes. Even the population, in spite of a more or less accurate census, it is difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of, for Siam, like many



other Eastern nations, considers the males the only inhabitants worth enumerating. In round numbers, however, the country may be said to comprise an area of about 280,000 square miles, inhabited by the number of people mentioned. Nevertheless, some statisticians give the country from 190,000 to 309,000 square miles, and put the population scattered over this wide region at nearly 12,000,000.

The Government was, until the law of 1874, an absolute monarchy—a despotism as complete as that of Burmah; but since that date—nominally, at least—the king's authority has been limited and modified by the legislative power being shared by the Supreme Council of the Empire and with the "Senabodi," or Council of Ministers, though in affairs of minor importance the vote of the Council of State suffices. This council is presided over by the king (p. 132), and is composed of ministers—who, however, have not the right to vote,—of from ten to twenty counsellors, nominated by the king, and of six princes "of the blood." The crown is hereditary, but the eldest son of the king does not necessarily succeed his father, the king reserving to himself the right of appointing a successor. This choice must, however, be confirmed by the Senabodi, in common with the princes of the four highest classes in the kingdom. Until lately, one of the peculiarities of the Government consisted in there being a "second king" (p. 133), as he was usually called in Europe, though in reality he was only a "major domo;" but the latter, often the son of the first, was always a very minor personage, and at most did not exercise any other authority than that of being the nominal head of the army, though he received a large civil list, and a guard of honour, and was consulted on all affairs of importance by the first king, with whom, as a rule, he was on terms of the greatest friendship. It was indeed doubtful whether he was a "king" at all in the usual acceptation of the term. Nor does it much matter since, on the death of the last holder, the office was abolished, and Siam is now ruled by a single sovereign—King Chulalongkorn I. The forty-one provinces are governed by "phrayas," a "phraya" being a counsellor of the first class. A "tiaou phraya," again, is equivalent to a privy counsellor, and "enjoys" the title of "excellency."

The exact revenue of the country it is difficult to get even an estimate of. The sum which annually arrives in the Bangkok Treasury is sometimes put at £1,200,000; but if the poll-tax, fines for exemption from the army, land-tax, tax on fruit-trees, pepper, spirits, gambling, and customs yield over £3,000,000, as has been estimated by the consular agents, there must be enormous peculation somewhere. The tax-gatherers, indeed, receive no salary; and as there is no system of audit and check efficient enough to keep their greed under control, a late writer on the subject\* is perhaps not far wrong when he affirms that the officials "s'appropriant frauduleusement la plus grande partie des revenus." The king, in addition to the "control" of the revenue, is entitled to four months' labour, or its equivalent, from each of his subjects, the priests and the Chinese settlers (who commute for it by another tax), slaves, public functionaries, and the fathers of three sons liable to serve excepted. Any one, however, can purchase exemption by

\* *Almanach de Gotha* (1880), p. 951. Another estimate puts the national income and expenditure each at about £1,200,000, and the population under 10,000,000 (McCarthy, *Proceedings of the Roy. Geog. Soc.*, Nov. 14, 1887).



paying 15s. to 20s. per month, or by furnishing a substitute in the person of some other person not liable to conscription. The army is at present drilled by European officers;



THE SUPREME KING OF SIAM IN HIS STATE ROBES.

and as every person over twenty-one years of age must serve under the colours, the result is said to be a very efficient force. The Siamese navy consists of eight vessels with forty-one guns, chiefly officered by Englishmen, and organised on the English model. In



addition to a great number of junks, or small vessels, there are about forty-two ships, the tonnage of which amounts in the aggregate to 16,000 tons, including three



THE "SECOND KING" OF SIAM IN HIS STATE ROBES.

steamers, under the Siamese flag. Altogether the country seems on a fair way to prosperity, though the material to work upon is not very promising. The last two kings were men of considerable enlightenment, and even learning; and the present sovereign—a young



man of thirty-four—has already visited India and some of the neighbouring colonies in search of knowledge. He is reported to be willing to imitate European ways so far as they seem to suit his people. Already he has the distribution of four orders of knighthood—the Star of Nine Points, the White Elephant, the Crown, and the Chulachonclao—and, among other of the distinctions which fall naturally to civilised or partially barbarous kings, is decorated with the Grand Cross of the English Order of St. Michael and St. George. He has sent ambassadors to England, has a consular agent in London, and is desirous of cultivating good relations with the British Government. At one time the Siamese Empire extended to Singapore, the suzerainty over the Malay rajahs exercised by the king being a survival of those palmy days of “Thaï,” but the present dynasty does not date back further than 1782. The established religion of the country is Buddhism; and though Protestant and other missionaries have been labouring in it since 1828, their efforts to change the opinions of the Siamese have been almost in vain. The barbarous tribes on the border and the Chinese have, however, been more impressible.

The country has great capabilities, and the prosperity of some of the cities astonishes a visitor whose prepossessions have been derived from a visit to some of the more ordinary Malay towns, which they are said to resemble. Bangkok, or Bangkok, as it is sometimes spelt, is sixteen miles in a straight line from the coast, but before it can be reached by the Menam River eighty miles of winding current have to be traversed. The Gulf of Siam, into which this river flows, is 450 miles in length by 235 in breadth; and though the peninsula of Cambodia consists for the most part of low-lying lands, it is unvisited by hurricanes, and hence shipwrecks are rare in this portion of the Eastern seas. The Menam River is impeded by a bar; but so far from the Siamese Government considering this a disadvantage, they object to any efforts being made to dredge it out, and have even sunk three junks in order to still further render the invasion of the capital by a foreign fleet a difficult and dangerous operation. The mouth of the river is bordered by mangrove swamps and jungle, but beyond these are immense rice-fields. Higher up the river is Paknam, with a population of 7,000, and several forts. Here is the Custom House, a very dilapidated and altogether, to European ideas, most unofficial-looking building, where the method of transacting business is about equally primitive. The river banks are here covered with tropical vegetation, and some immense sugar-plantations, rice-fields, and Burmese villages, with orange-gardens and orchards of fruit-trees, make their appearance. But so dense is the vegetation, and so low the ground, that the city cannot be seen until it is closely approached, the chief signs of the capital of Siam being near at hand being the presence of foreign ships anchored in the river, and a number of native vessels flying the national standard of a white elephant on a crimson ground. Its population is vaguely estimated at from 255,000 to 600,000.

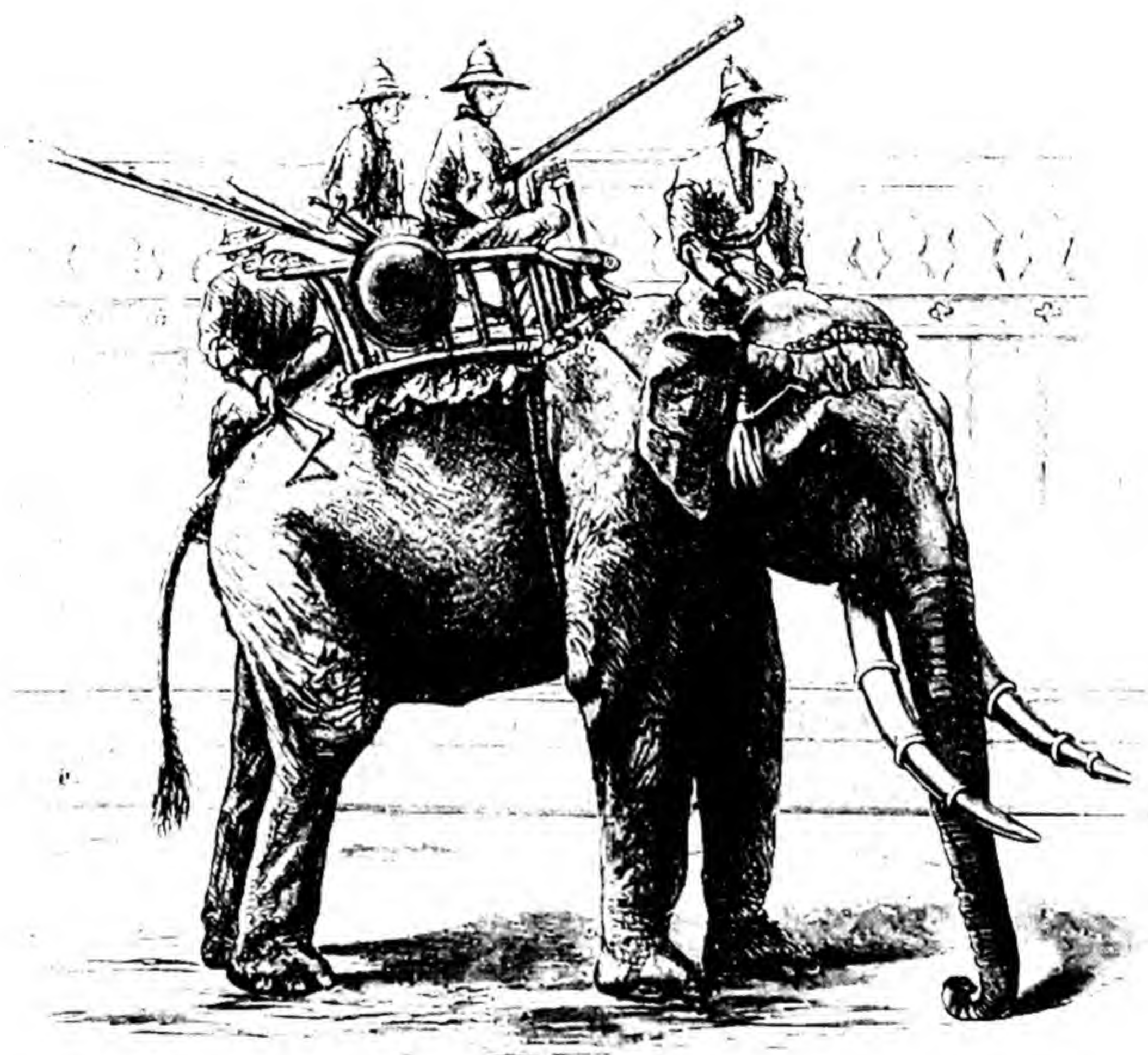
In earlier days Bangkok contested the commercial supremacy of the East with Canton and Calcutta. It is often called the Venice of the East, not so much because, either commercially or politically, the capital of Siam has anything in common with the Queen of the Adriatic, but simply because locomotion through both cities must be accomplished in much the same fashion. Almost every house in Bangkok—as, indeed, in so many towns in Malaysia—is built on piles or on a floating raft, and the thoroughfares are



simply canals and intersecting branches of the river. There are a few footpaths on firm land, and the king has begun to build highways along the side of the principal canals. Yet the town is not unhealthy, and, for the tropics, is even salubrious. At Bangkok the mean temperature is about  $84^{\circ}$ , the maximum heat  $97^{\circ}$ , and the lowest cold felt in eight years was  $54^{\circ}$ . Every year the country is visited by the south-west and north-east monsoons, the former laden with cool clouds, thunderstorms, and torrents of rain, the latter the harbinger of refreshing weather, which "sets up" the residents, jaded by the hot months which preceded it. Indeed, the building on piles and rafts was suggested to the founder of Bangkok solely by sanitary reasons. Originally the capital was at Ayuthia, founded in 1350; but when, in 1769, it was removed to the present site, the new town, like the old, was built on the banks of the river. Cholera, however, soon broke out, and was so frequent that one of the kings ordered the dwellings to be built on the river itself, in order to obtain greater cleanliness and ventilation. Hence at the present day the Siamese of Bangkok may be said to be almost amphibious. Most of their life is passed on the water, and nearly all of their animal food they get from it. Except about the king's palace, horses are rarely seen, and carriages were formerly equally unknown. Canoes and boats are the ordinary modes of conveyance, and one or other is an absolute necessary to every household. A child is early trained to navigate it, so that men, women, and children use the oar, the paddle, and the rudder almost intuitively. Even the Chinese have left their sedan behind them, and, in common with the Siamese, take kindly to boat-life. The waters are covered with barges of all sorts, from the skiff, to use the language of a modern writer, "scarcely large enough to hold a dog, to the magnificently adorned barge which is honoured with the presence of royalty; from the shabbiest canoe hewn out of the small trunk of a tree from the jungle up to the roofed and curtained, the carved and gilded barque of the nobles—every rank and condition has its boats plying in endless activity night and day on the surface of the Menam waters." Bangkok is, in a word, "a floating city," the limits of which on land it is at first sight impossible to determine. The first view of it all travellers agree in describing as rather imposing (p. 129). In the dim light, it may be, of an Eastern morning there bursts on the sight a panorama of towers and the roofs of what seems an endless array of temples, or pagodas, each standing in its own grounds. The mind revels in old fairy tales of the "gorgeous East" as the sun glances over the roofs and walls of these edifices, each of which seems ablaze with jewels and plates of gold. A closer view is, however, disappointing. The walls which at a distance seem built up of gems are discovered to be only brick and mortar, or perhaps wood, embellished with tawdry gilding, porcelain, and rich mosaics of glass, which, though intrinsically of little value, present a splendid coruscation of colours. Most of these pagodas, in which the rites of the Buddhist faith are administered by thousands of priests—though many of these have now been turned adrift in order to earn a livelihood by more honourable means than begging—have been built by pious men, who, either by good works of this type during their lifetime, or by money which they have bequeathed for the purpose, have hoped to atone for many previous shortcomings. Porcelain enters into the composition of the walls of these buildings, but often in a



peculiar fashion. It is humble earthenware, fragments of broken plates, and other utensils of a like quality. There is a familiar story told at Bangkok, which Mr. Thomson has recorded, how a roguish trader arrived in the river with a cargo of crockery on speculation. The venture hung long on his hands. The willow pattern seemed not in favour with a people who are not deficient in taste; but at last, when the trader began to think that ruin was not far off, fortune delivered into his hands a wealthy Siamese noble who was busy finishing one of these "wats," or shrines. To him the owner of the shipload of crockery addressed himself, representing that it was the fashion in Europe for places of worship to be decorated with ewers, soup-plates, milk



SIAMESE WAR ELEPHANT OF FORMER DAYS.

jugs, tea-cups, and even less noteworthy pieces of porcelain. The bait took, and hence the *recherche* ornamentation of the Buddhist temple, in which rows of pudding-dishes were fastened in the plaster, and collections of dish-covers decorated the balconies and parapet. It is, however, satisfactory to find that before the trader was paid the imposition was discovered by the "pious founder," and the tale ends by relating how the rogue not only lost all chance of future dealings with the Siamese, but even met present retribution by not being paid for his useful wares put to a useless purpose. The royal palace is a fine building, furnished in a mixture of European and Oriental styles; however, of late years the decorations, especially in the apartments intended for public inspection, have inclined more and more over towards Western tastes, or rather towards those of the City of Palaces—Calcutta, and not London or Paris, being the model in those parts of the world.

The Siamese prisons are almost as bad as those of Burmah, and the punishments



awarded to crime quite as cruel, in spite of the Buddhist religion teaching that it is more blessed to preserve than to destroy life. Serious crime is not great, but is replaced by a very lax condition of public morality. Polygamy flourishes with a vigour unknown in China, opium-smoking is as universal as in the latter country, and gambling is equally a passion among both nations. Justice is administered with ostentatious gravity, but in reality is flagrantly bought and sold, the agents concerned in the business being, however, so subtle and polished that, as Mr. Thomson remarks, even the sober, dignified-looking judge almost persuades himself that he is practically the upright person he is theoretically supposed to be, though he knows full well that a little gold mysteriously dropped into the scales will make the balance of justice kick the beam on one side or the other. However, of late years Siam has changed greatly for the better. The late king was a man of superior intelligence, but his mind was moulded thoroughly on the old lines, and therefore he could scarcely be expected to turn out a reformer after the modern fashion. The present sovereign is, however, a person of a different stamp. His early education was intrusted to an English lady, Mrs. Leonowens, who has published an account of her life at the Siamese Court, and the early ideas he thus imbibed have been enlarged by his visits to Singapore and Calcutta, and the constant intercourse he holds with foreigners. Slavery has been abolished, and the custom of crouching in the presence of a superior has been decreed no longer necessary. The army—we have seen—is equipped and drilled after the European fashion, and is said to be more efficient than that of Burmah. The artillery is modern and serviceable, and elephants (p. 136) are carefully trained for war purposes. Private houses are even beginning to be modelled on those of the West, and the king, since his visit to Calcutta, seems anxious that some at least of the streets of his capital should bear a semblance to those of that city by having a fountain in the circus formed by the intersection of two ways. In addition, he has made a good road around the city, just within the walls, and has added several blocks of compact two-storey brick houses to those built by his father. When we mentioned that the river and the canals which intersect the city were the only modes of conveyance in Bangkok, it ought to have been added, until the completion of this road. The possession of a road has suggested carriages. Ox-carts (p. 160) have accordingly been introduced, and it is now reported that some of the wealthier nobles have taken to importing carriages from Calcutta, and may be seen taking a drive at the fashionable hour of the afternoon, “sitting gravely upright, and, as they roll along the dusty streets, looking upon their friends and neighbours with a very perceptible sense of new-found importance, illustrative of deep culture and nice refinement.” This advance in civilisation necessarily follows, since the king has started a barouche and six horses, in which, driven by liveried postillions, and attended by “gorgeous outriders and a mounted escort of the royal guard,” he regularly takes his airing in the proper style of the Maidan Esplanade in the Indian capital.

With the exception of Bangkok, there are few other large towns in Siam worthy of note. Among the exceptions may be included Pechaburi, about a hundred miles south-west of the capital, where the king has built a palace, and the reputation of which for healthiness is such that both the Europeans and natives use it as a sanatorium. It is built at the mouth of the Pechaburi River, near the range of hills which divides Siam from the Tenasserim



province of British Burmah. Though its appearance would not lead one to imagine it thickly populated, yet so closely do these Oriental people huddle together that we are not surprised to learn that there are some 20,000 inhabitants in this peculiarly Siamese town. The king's palace is built on the summit of a hill at the back of the city, and on an adjoining eminence are some pagodas and temples, and near the foot of it various Buddhist monasteries, the inmates of which are occupied in instructing native youth gratuitously. In this locality is also a cave "filled with idols," chiefly gilt Buddhas, and the entrance to it is shaded by trees filled with chattering monkeys. The king lives for a few months in the year at Pechaburi for the sake of his health, and since he has acquired a taste for European luxury is fond of driving along the excellent roads which he has constructed in and about the city. The governor of the place was also met by one of the latest visitors driving in a "buggy," the buggy and the European shirt and sun-hat being the outer emblems of the Western habits which are being so rapidly engrafted on the Siamese, the "panoung," or cloth worn round the waist and passed between the leg, with striped socks and patent leather slippers, and the finely-wrought gold "xroh," or betel-box, being the native side of his excellency's culture.

At Pechaburi also reside several American missionaries; but the extent of their success is limited, the Siamese being more anxious to learn English than to exchange their old faith for the new one offered to them by these self-denying visitors. Near the town is a Laos village, the huts being built of bamboo on piles, and roofed with palm-leaves (p. 124). Under the floor are housed the domestic animals, and here also are stowed away all kinds of rubbish not valuable enough to be sheltered in the upper chamber. In the rear of the hut is usually a large barn for keeping the supply of rice; but in the hut itself, with the exception of a few baskets and large boxes, there is nothing in the shape of furniture. These people have often been at war with the Siamese, who, though masters, have learned to respect their adversaries as no mean foes. In Siam there are, especially at Angkor, in the province of Siamdrap, ruins of gigantic temples and other buildings, pointing to an era when a higher stage of civilisation had been reached in this region. But as these remains are found in greater perfection in the neighbouring kingdom of Cambodia, it may be useful to economise our space by reserving what we have got to say regarding this feature of the Further East until we reach the empire which will be the subject of the next section.\*

#### CAMBODIA.

Jammed in between Siam, the kingdom of Anam, and French Cochin-China, is one of the most ancient monarchies in the world, albeit its name is little heard nowadays, although it has been honoured with a place in that *libro d'oro* of sovereigns, the *Almanach de Gotha*. Cambodia—or, as it really ought to be written, Kamboja,

\* Bowring: "The Kingdom and People of Siam" (1857); Grehen: "Le royaume de Siam" (1868); Mouhot: "Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China, Cambodia, and Laos during the years 1858-1860" (1864); Bastian: "Die Völker des östlichen Asiens" (1866-67); Pallegoix: "Description du royaume Thaï ou Siam" (1854); "Mémoires de la Société Académique Indo-Chinoise," and "Annales de l'Extrême Orient;" "Foreign Office Reports" up to date; Bock: "Temples and Elephants" (1884); etc.



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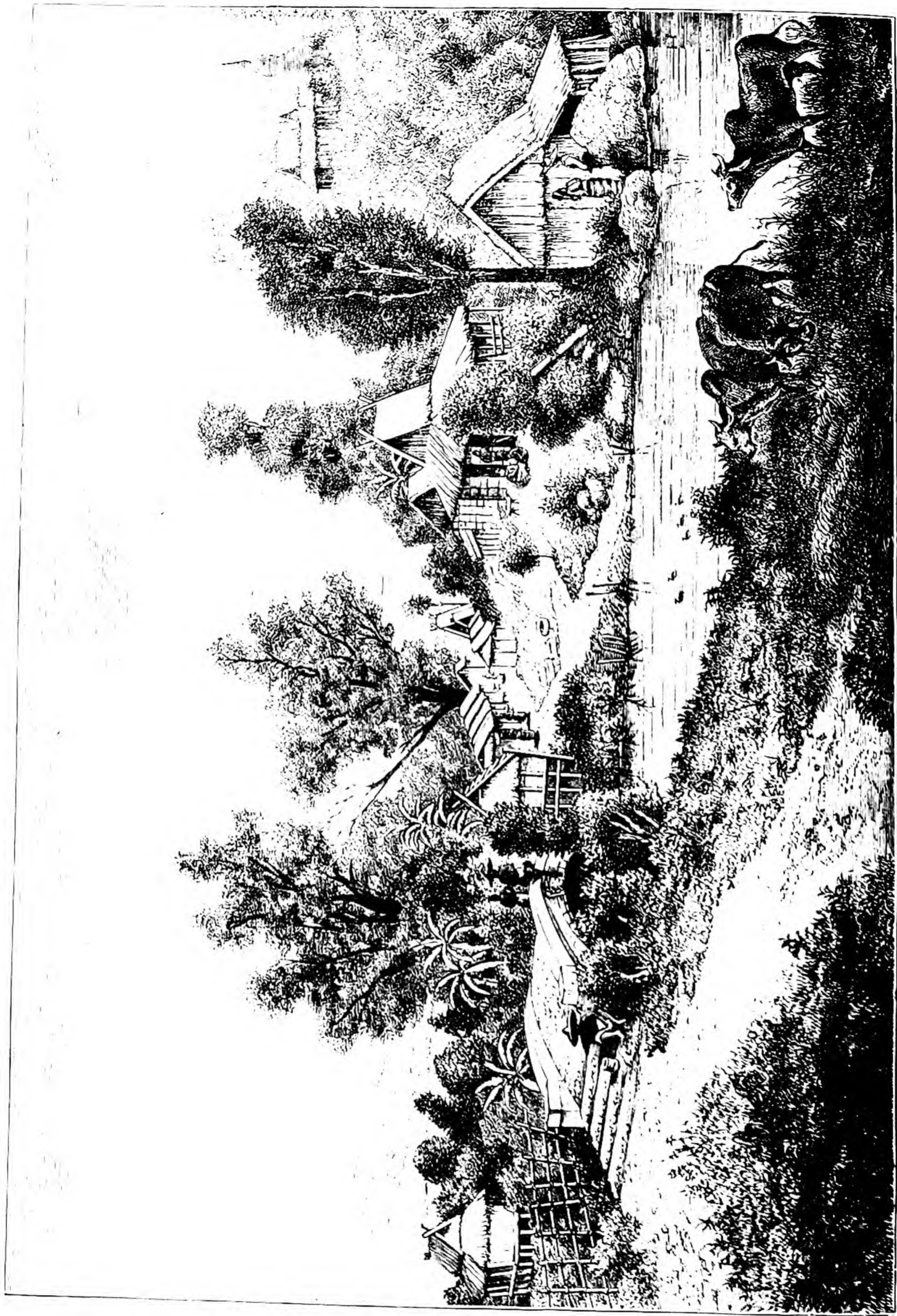
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HAMLET AND BRIDGE IN CAMBODIA.



or Kampouchia—the kingdom in question, though at present in a condition of passive decay, is still a country of much interest, but more from what it holds of the past than what it contains of importance to the modern workaday world. It is the home of the “Ko,” “Kamer,” or “Khmer;” but as to who the Khmer are or were there is the usual amount of obscurity which hangs around everything connected with the history and ethnology of this part of Further India. Their own tradition is that before they came from the north the “Tsiam” or “Champa” people were in possession of the country, whilst “the Khmer themselves seem to have preceded the descent of the ‘Thai’ race, to which the people of Siam and Laos belong.”\* But the written annals of Cambodia do not stretch further back than 1346—a period when, Colonel Yule thinks, in all probability, the kingdom’s power, and perhaps its civilisation, had passed their climax. When the Portuguese found their way to the country, soon after the conquest of Malacca, some traces of the former splendour of Cambodia still remained; but even these remnants soon died away. By the end of the sixteenth century “the land swarmed with foreign adventurers,” the most active of whom were Japanese; and at the instigation of these vagabonds the Manila Spaniards attempted various filibustering expeditions, though with little result. The Portuguese, however, managed to establish factories in the country, and by the end of the seventeenth century both the Dutch and the English had established settlements on the mainland or on the islands off the coast. Meantime the country was ground between Siam and Cochin-China as between the upper and nether mill-stones. By repeated seizures the former reduced the kingdom to its present limits. In 1846 the kingdom was put under the joint protectorate of Siam and Cochin-China as its suzerains; but this step did not prevent France from seizing in 1859 the Anamite provinces in the delta of the Mekong, nor from constituting the colony of “Cochin-China,” and thus still further reducing the ancient kingdom of Cambodia. Finally, in 1864, the country—or what remained of it—was put under a joint Siamese and French protectorate, and the then king crowned in the presence of envoys from the two “powers.” The Siamese Envoy, however, soon found his position untenable, and left the Cambodian capital. The inevitable came in 1886 in the shape of a convention, by which the French hold the customs and have a monopoly of the opium trade, while the kingdom is nominally autonomous, though in reality a dependency of France.

The chief feature of Cambodia—geographically—is the Mekong River and its chief tributary, the Mesap (p. 144), which flows through it, and the “Great Fresh-Water Lake” (Talé-Sab), a shallow depression in the alluvial, which retains part of the annual overflow of the river, and is hence subject to great variations in size and depth. In Bengal such lakes—Colonel Yule notes—are called “jhîls.” The Cambodian one during the rains is said to be about 120 miles long, and from eight to twenty-two in breadth. During the dry season its depth does not average over four feet, though in some parts of the middle no bottom has been found. The Udong River—a broad channel, uniting the lake and the Mekong—fills the lake from the latter river in the months from June to December, but for the rest of the year

\* For notes on these people, and those of the neighbouring countries, see “The Peoples of the World,” Vol. IV., pp. 154–169.



it drains the lake into the Mekong. Its waters abound with fish, which during the dry season are caught in great numbers by the natives. During that period they build pile villages in the lake, and there dry and salt the product of their industry for export to China, either in that condition, or living in cages, or for conversion into oil. During this period an immense fleet of fishing-smacks come on its waters, but the terrible storms force them to seek shelter during the rainy season. Along the shores of the lake during the dry season are also found large herds of wild elephants, which at one time were so numerous that a fairly tamed one—useful as a beast of burden, though not equal to those trained in India—could be bought for £10 or £12. A rhinoceros also haunts the foot of the mountains north of the lake, and there are said to be three species of wild

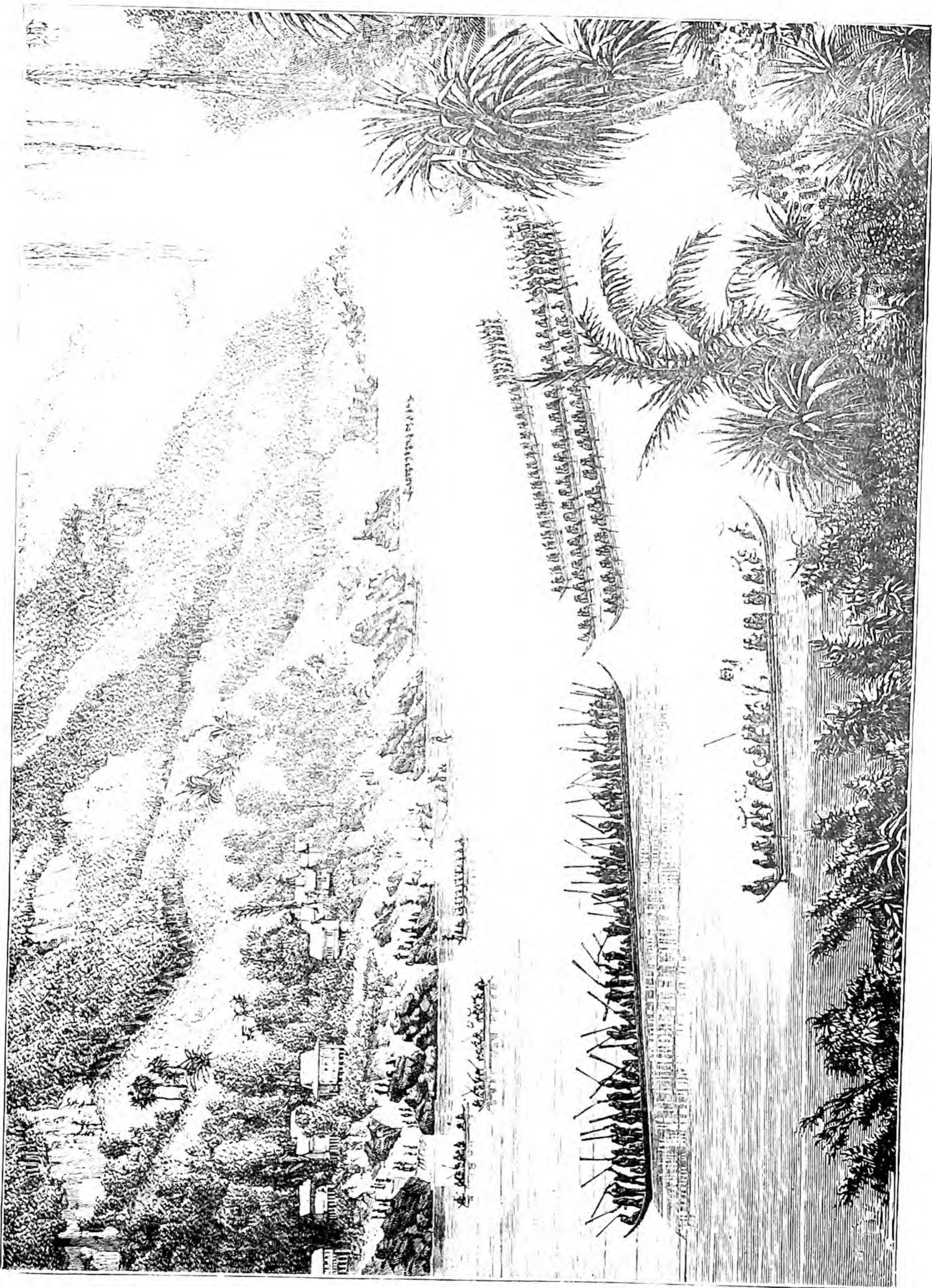


VIEW IN KHONG, CAMBODIA.

cattle found throughout the country. The Cambodian ponies are noted for their strength and beauty, and form a considerable article of export to Bangkok. The horns of the rhinoceros, cardamoms, gamboge, and eagle-wood are also articles of commerce. Gamboge, indeed, though deriving its name from the country, is chiefly found in the old Cambodian part of Siam—not far from Korat—and, as Mr. Hanbury has shown, is the gum of *Garcinia morella*, var. *pedicellata*, though less esteemed varieties, hardly known commercially in Great Britain, are obtained from various species of American, Ceylon, and Mysore plants.\* Eagle or aloe-wood (p. 129), for which the country was even noted among the early Arab voyagers, is also at present chiefly found in Siamese territory, near Chantibun, not far from the coast. The terms eagle-wood, *agila*, &c., Colonel Yule observes, have really nothing to do with eagles, but are corruptions of the Sanskrit Aguru, which again applies to the internal cavities in the soft wood of *Aquilaria agallocha*, the result of disease, but for which the

\* *Transactions of the Linnean Society*, Vol. XXIV., p. 487.





BARGES ON THE MEKONG RIVER - CAMBODIA



tree is valued. Nutmegs, liquorice, caoutchouc, gutta-percha, sapan-wood, pepper, rice, cotton, and benzoin are among the other products of the country recorded by Yule, and hides, horns, tortoiseshell, ivory, lac, and dried elephant's flesh are also exported. The iron smelted and wrought by some of the hill tribes, though not an article of commerce, is of a high quality.

The country has now only one port—Kâmpot—and the trade is chiefly in the hands of the Chinese. The capital itself and several of the interior cities are surrounded by fine tracts of alluvial land, but a high range of hills has to be passed before Panompin (P'nompenh of the Oriental purist), the metropolis (p. 145), is reached. When Cambodia was at the height of its prosperity, Angkor was the chief city of the kingdom, but in consequence of its exposure to Siamese attacks it was abandoned, and after much chopping about the seat of government was, in 1866, transferred to Panompin, at the confluence of the outlet of the Great Lake with the Mekong—though it ought to be noted that only the southern half of this sheet of water, which is regarded with much superstition, belongs to Cambodia, the northern part being actually in possession of Siam. Panompin (though Udong is now the official capital) is described by Mr. Vincent as dull. "Nothing breaking the uniformity of the bamboo huts excepting a slender pyramidal pagoda, one of the palace buildings, and two blocks of brick stores built by the king, it resembles many of the villages on the banks of the Mesap, only differing from them in size, in number of dwellings, and shops." In the city is a French mission, a number of European traders, a company of French troops, and a French commandant, or *Protecteur*, as he is styled, "who represents French interests *versus* his Majesty's." One or more French gunboats are also usually stationed on the river, though the trim appearance of the vessels flying the tricolour, compared with the rather dilapidated war-vessels from which floats the red-bordered blue flag of Cambodia, must to the natives be an ever present signal that the glory of the "Khmer" has departed. Panompin itself extends along the banks of the river for a distance of about three miles, but with the exception of an embankment of earth on the landward side, erected at the time of the Anamite troubles, there is no wall about the city, nor even around the palace. The main street runs along the river bank. Its macadam consists mainly of broken brick and sand, and the shops on either side are bamboo huts, owned by Chinese, Klings, or by Cambodians and Cochin-Chinese, though many of these shops are, in addition, gambling dens and opium-smoking haunts. In the Cambodian stores cotton and the silk goods for which the country is famous may be had, while the Klings deal chiefly in European wares. There are also among the 20,000 people in the town a number of Siamese, but the Cochin-Chinese are the principal foreigners, and may at once be distinguished from the Cambodians by their lower stature, less muscular frames, more Mongol features, and by their long hair being fastened in a knot behind. The palace is really a fine building, King Norondon the First's great ambition being to live in a finer house than his Majesty of Siam, and to imitate as far as may be the manners, dress, and *tout ensemble* of the French nation, and especially of the second French Empire, whose policy first made him acquainted with his polite neighbours. It is also needless to say that his Majesty is a Grand Cross of the Legion, and generally is as much of a Frenchman as his



limited education and Indo-Chinese face will admit of. His people are good-natured and apathetic, with little aptitude or ambition for trade, and hence the wealth of Cambodia is monopolised by Chinese, Anamites, and Malays. The national religion is Buddhism, mixed up with much pagan superstition, such as calling on the "devil-dancing medicine man" in sickness. There are also 2,000 Roman Catholic Christians, and on the coast very ancient settlements of Malay Mohammedans. In addition, there live on the confines of Cambodia numbers of wild, or, as Colonel Yule more justly prefers to call them, illiterate tribes, with whose religion and habits we are still very imperfectly acquainted. The Cambodian language differs from all the neighbouring tongues, but their letters are "an ornamental form of the Pali, which has been the foundation of all the Indo-Chinese alphabets." The inscriptions on the ancient monuments are, however, in an older form, not understood by the modern priests. The government has undergone few or no changes of late years, except what the introduction of foreign manners has forced on it. The king is an absolute monarch, and most accounts represent him having under him a second king, corresponding to the "Yuvarâja" of ancient India, and by a corruption of which title he is known. The furniture and decorations of the palace are quite as fine as the building itself, though, as always happens in such cases in Oriental buildings, the costly articles which have been huddled wholesale into the rooms are scattered in the most heterogeneous manner, more for the sake of being shown to visitors than for any enjoyment the owner can derive from them. The king, however, takes a great pride in his palace, the splendour of which contrasts so painfully with the squalor of the surrounding streets of hovels. Indeed, his Majesty is said never to hesitate a moment in appropriating private property when he finds that by doing so he can beautify his own residence. Nevertheless, he is well liked by his people, and rules with as fair an approach to rectitude as can be expected from an Oriental potentate. The presence of French soldiers in his capital has, moreover, taken away from him that wholesale fear of his subjects which at one time acted as a deterrent to any gross misconduct on the part of himself and officials, while at the same time the watchful eye of the "Protecteur" sees that anything in the shape of Burmah-like savagery does not openly, at least, display itself. He is also beginning to imbibe something of the "free-thinking" notions of his Gallic neighbours, and when it suits his mood mocks at Buddha, or treads under foot the ancient and almost religious etiquette of his country. Within the last few years he has visited Hong-Kong, Shanghai, and other cities, in order, like his Siamese brother, to see the world for himself. The Cambodians do not, however, hold out even to an optimist much hope of ever attaining anything like their ancient greatness, for they are not an energetic race: the chances rather are that in time they will gradually lose their independence by becoming part and parcel of the French Empire. The king is, indeed, already surrounding himself with European advisers. His chief aide-de-camp at the period of Mr. Vincent's visit was an English Jew, and his small army, mainly composed of natives of the Philippines, is beginning to be officered by Frenchmen. The machine shops attached to the "arsenal" are superintended by French artisans; in the stables are French horses, though, owing to the all-important absence of good roads, neither they nor the French and English carriages owned by the king



can be used except on very high and very painful occasions; and, as the European visitors who have been hospitably entertained by Norondon the First are agreeably aware, his Majesty of Cambodia has in his pay a French cook, cunning in his art. Even between the date of Mr. Thomson's visit and the year 1880 there seemed to have been great advances in the Cambodian monarch's education, so that we may soon expect to hear that the Indo-Chinese lacquer has been quite covered with French polish. Mr. Mouhot's description of Udong, when—in 1860—it was the capital, corresponds very closely to that which Mr. Vincent has given of Panompin at the present day. He especially notes the animation of the town, owing to the number of chiefs resorting to it for business and pleasure, or who were passing through it on their way from one province



VIEW ON THE BANKS OF THE MEKONG, CAMBODIA.

to another. "Every moment," he writes, "I met mandarins, either borne in litters or on foot, followed by a crowd of slaves carrying various articles; some yellow or scarlet parasols, more or less according to the rank of the person, and the boxes with betel. I also encountered horsemen mounted on pretty, spirited little animals, richly caparisoned and covered with bells, ambling along, while a troop of attendants, covered with dust and sweltering with heat, ran after them. Light carts, drawn by a couple of small oxen, trotting along rapidly and noisily, were here and there to be seen. Occasionally a large elephant passed majestically by. On this side were numerous processions to the pagoda, marching to the sound of music; there, again, was a band of ecclesiastics in single file, seeking alms, draped in their yellow cloaks, and with the holy vessels on their backs." Kâmpot, the sole seaport of the country, is on the Gulf of Siam: it is approached by a small shallow river, not easily navigable, and interrupted by a bar, which compels large ships to anchor in the roadstead outside. The chief merchants are Fokien Chinese, but the trade is now reduced to very small proportions.



Cambodia is, however, in modern times of most note for its ancient remains (p. 118). These gigantic remnants of a former age—comparable only, as regards their contrast with the present, to the ruins of Mexico and Central America (Vol. III, p. 16)—are found in more than forty different localities, though the most important localities for them are now all in Siamese territory, north of the Great Fresh-Water Lake. “The remains,” to use the concise description of Colonel Yule, “embrace walled cities of large extent; palaces and temples, stupendous in scale and rich in design, and often most elaborately



VIEW OF PANOMPIN, THE CAPITAL OF CAMBODIA.

decorated with long galleries of storeyed bas-reliefs; artificial lakes enclosed by walls of cut stone; stone bridges of extraordinary design and excellent execution; elaborate embanked highways across alluvial flats, &c. Were it possible to reconcile the geography, they would almost justify the extravagant fictions of Mendez Pinto regarding the palaces and temples of Timplan and Timagogo.” The most surprising of these structures is the great Wat or Temple of Angkor, or Nagkhon, the ancient capital, fifteen miles north of the lake, and the one with which, owing to the exertions of Mouhot, Bastian, Thomson, Carné, and Vincent, we are better acquainted than with any other. Miles away from any settlement, save the few rude huts of the attendant priests, embedded in the heart of a primeval forest of cocoa, betal-nut, and toddy palms, the first sight of it strikes the beholder with an awe and astonishment which a closer examination only



serves to intensify. The corridors, towers from 180 feet upwards, lordly flights of steps, carved walls, griffins, pillars, and halls of this magnificent edifice well entitle it to be called one of the architectural wonders of the world. It has been pronounced as imposing as Memphis or Thebes, and more mysterious. All travellers who have visited it—and of late years it has attracted not a few—agree that in this distant part of Siam there exists a building, hardly in ruins, though neglected, which defies all explanation. “The first view of the ruin is almost overwhelming,” writes Mr. Vincent, who confesses that to attempt to describe it is beyond his powers. M. Mouhot, whose elaborate details, as well as the fine photographs of Mr. Thomson, are our chief data regarding this and other Cambodian antiquities, declares that the Nagkhon Wat Temple is “a rival to that of Solomon, and erected by some ancient Michael Angelo,” and “might take an honourable place beside our most beautiful buildings. It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome.”\* It would be worse than useless attempting any elaborate notes on this remarkable structure, or the almost as interesting remains which lie beside it; but the illustration on p. 148 will enable the reader to gain some idea of one of these very remarkable and mysterious buildings of the East. The Nagkhon temple is five miles south of the ruins of the city itself. This ancient town is surrounded by walls forming a quadrangle, nearly eight miles and a half in circumference and thirty feet in height, and in addition, there is a very wide ditch outside of all. The walls are pierced by four gates of very “grandiose, though fantastic” architecture. But after examining all these ruins, the question still remains unanswered, Who built these temples and cities? That it was a race identical with the present Cambodians one can hardly bring oneself to believe. At the date of our earliest acquaintance with this people they did not dwell in these cities, had no tradition even of their builders, and, though living in more magnificent state than now, so far as concerned their kings and magnates, they were then, no more than now, capable of such sculpture or architecture. Indeed, the details of these ruins are in the main Indian, but much also exists which connects them with Indo-China and Java. Much, again, Colonel Yule properly remarks, “is unique.” But what has ever puzzled, and most likely ever will puzzle, antiquaries is the Roman-Doric character of the enriched pilasters, so frequent a feature in the building, though in Ceylon and in the mediæval Burmese remains something similar, though not so marked, occurs. From the fact that the Chinese ambassadors, who visited the country between 1296 and 1352, do not mention the Nagkhon Wat, it is by some thought that it must have been built subsequent to that date. This is, however, too slender a foundation to rear a substantial theory on; and perhaps the building was, even at the date of their visit, an antiquity, though they did not visit it or note its occurrence among the many other objects which attracted their attention. We do not even know the object for which such temples were erected. M. Garnier thinks they were for the worship of Buddha, and undoubtedly some of them were; though Mr. Fergusson, while admitting that he may be wrong, regards the great temples as monuments of that serpent-worship to the elucidation of which he has written such able and extremely ponderous volumes. Every nation, from the Greeks to the lost ten tribes of Israel, has been called in to explain their presence; and though in time the

\* “Travels,” Vol. I., p. 279.



inscriptions on them may be deciphered, those which have already been made out afford little hope of our just curiosity being much gratified in that direction. It is impossible to believe that these monuments could have been reared by a race who were living five hundred years ago. The people who built them must have been different from the present Cambodians; and unless we have to revolutionise all our ideas of the rise and decay of civilisation, a much longer interval than that must have been necessary to allow of the disappearance or displacement of this wonderful nation of architects and sculptors.\*

#### ANAM.

In the south-west of China, drained by the rivers Tue-duk-kiang and Song-koi, falling into the Gulf of Tonquin, is a considerable region which, though geographically, and perhaps ethnologically, a part of the Middle Kingdom, is politically not of it. Still further south, shut off from the rest of Indo-China by a range of mountains, is a long coast region drained by many though unimportant rivers, long known as Cochin-China; while in the delta of the Mekong is a flat, rich, but unhealthy tract of country which of late years has come before the world under the name of Lower Cochin-China, though from its present owners it is more frequently called French Cochin-China. As the two regions first named constitute part of the independent Empire of Anam, we shall accordingly designate them by that political title, reserving the more familiar title for the southern province, which since 1867 the French have held.

Peopled possibly from China, it is historically known that for long this region was under the direct control of Chinese satraps. But towards the close of the tenth century a successful rebellion enabled the Anamese to gain such a degree of independence that for at least eight hundred years their country owed but a nominal allegiance to Peking; and not only did the Anamese prosper within their own borders, but they expanded over them, at the cost of their neighbours, the Cambodians, from whom they wrested Tsiampa and the country which at a later period the French managed to wrest from them. About the year 1787 France obtained a footing on the peninsula of Tourane and the Isle of Pulo-Condor, where at present they have a penal settlement; but it was not until 1858 that, on the excuse of French missionaries being murdered, Napoleon III. began to show the Emperor of Anam what manner of men his hitherto amicable neighbours were. In 1862, after the experience indicated, the court of Hué had to accept a treaty whereby, among other conditions which do not concern us, it ceded three provinces to France, and in 1867 a second unwilling compact, by which the remaining three provinces also passed out of the Anamese emperor's hands. This was the origin of the French colony of "Cochin-chine française." The relations of the Anamese "court" with the French Republic rest on a treaty signed in 1874. By this arrangement the King of Anam was to be independent of every foreign power, including China, by whose emperor he was up to that date invested with the royal office.

\* Garnier: "Voyage d'Exploration en Indo-Chine" (1873); Cortambert and de Rosny: "Tableau de la Cochin-Chine" (1862); Delaporte: "Voyage au Cambodge" (1880); Leonowen: "The English Governess at the Court of Siam" (1864); Aymonnier: "Dictionnaire français-cambodgien, et Géographie du Cambodge" (1876); and above all the valuable works of Thomson, Mouhot, Carné, Bastian, and Fergusson, Vincent, and the article of Colonel Yule already quoted from.



In return for this guarantee the Annamese monarch engaged to "accommodate his policy to that of France," to annul all ordinances he had passed against the Catholics in his kingdom, to open his ports to Foreign commerce, and to permit the residence at each of them of a French consul, with a military guard of not more than one hundred men. Finally, in 1884, Annam was declared a "French Protectorate." Tonquin was ceded to France; Hué, the capital, was occupied by a French garrison, while the Emperor is controlled by a French



RUINS ON MOUNT BAKHENG, CAMBODIA.

Resident-General, three Residents, and six Assistant-Residents, under whom the native officials carry on the government. Military operations were not put a stop to by these political arrangements, the Tonquinese especially, at the instigation of the Chinese, giving much trouble to their new masters.\* The government is an absolute monarchy, without anything in the shape of a constitution, powerful custom being the sole check on the despotism of the king. The throne follows the laws of primogeniture, but all other offices are supposed, as in China, to go by merit. Hence, with the exception of the king, who

\* "Statistiques Coloniales pour l'année 1884;" Vignon: "Les Colonies françaises, leur commerce, leur situation économique, leur utilité pour la métropole, etc." (1885); etc.



is sovereign, high priest, and supreme judge in one, and whose only advisers in the executive portion of his offices are a Privy Council and seven Ministers, all the Anamese are equal: for office is the only social distinction between man and man, and office goes by fitness. Anam in this respect resembles China in Asia and Russia in Europe, only in the latter country office goes by favour, not by fitness. The two chief parts of the empire—Cochin-China and Tonquin—were governed by viceroys, and the twenty-four provinces are now each presided over by a governor, under French control.

The Kingdom or Empire of Anam, as it is sometimes called, comprises Cochin-China, without the six lower provinces which now belong to France, Tonquin, which was conquered in 1802, and Tsiampa, which at an early date was filched from Cambodia. Under Anam must also be included the tributary states of Laos and the territory of the independent Mois, or Stiengs—wretched tribes of savages, about whom little is known, save that they live on the frontiers of Cochin-China, and are pagans of a low type. Altogether, exclusive of the French colony, which has an area of 21,630 miles, Anam is about the size of France, *i.e.*, about 230,000 square miles,\* with a population of 6,000,000, most of whom are in Tonquin. Of these the greater part are Buddhists, though the higher classes of Anam profess the doctrines of Confucius; and it is estimated that there are 100,000 native Christians, under six bishops, though, with the exception of a few thousands, these are almost confined to Tonquin. Much superstition, however, mingles with their Buddhism; and beyond the respect paid to the dead and to their ancestors generally, religion little troubles the apathetic, lazy, unemotional Anamese. They, however, respect their superiors, love their parents and native land, and being fond of mimicry, learn with remarkable facility.

Commerce, as usual in the Indo-Chinese countries, is mainly in the hands of the sharp Chinese. From China come large quantities of cotton and silk-manufactured goods, tea, and porcelain; and among other articles may be mentioned opium, paper, potatoes, powder, medicinal plants, petroleum, paints, wines and liquors, &c., while rice, salt fish, salt, undyed cotton, fish-oil, mushrooms, &c., are sent abroad. The total revenue of Anam and Tonquin is estimated at £560,000, and the expenditure at £1,760,000. The army of occupation includes 12,000 men.

The Anam army was said to number about 150,000 men, chiefly recruited from Cochin-China, Tonquin loyalty never being sufficiently established to allow the Government to risk recruiting in that populous part of the realm. The Grand Marshal who commanded the army was personally responsible for the citadel of Hué. Formerly there was a Department of Marine, and a nominal navy, comprising in 1884 7 corvettes, 300 junks, an old steamer, and some sailing ships presented to the king in 1876. These were manned by some 16,000 men, and carried about 1,400 guns of all sorts, some of them being chiefly remarkable from their antiquity and utter inefficiency as lethal weapons.†

The climate of the north of Anam differs much from that of the south. In the former there is, according to M. Maunoir, no really dry season. In December and January the thermometer falls to 43° or 41° Fahr. Summer lasts from the end of

\* In some publications the estimate given falls short by one-half of this calculation of Behm and Wagner.

† "Report by Sir Brooks Robertson respecting his Visit to Haiphong and Hanoi" (Parliamentary Paper, 1876); Dutreuil de Rhins: *Bulletin de la Soc. de Geogr. de Paris*, Feb., 1878; De la Liraye: "Notes Historiques sur la Nation Annamite" (Saigon, 1865); Postel: "La Cochinchine Cambodie et Annam" (1883); Bouïnais et Paulus: "Cochinchine" (1882).



April to the month of August, during which period it is excessively hot, and the coasts are frequently visited with typhoons and other storms. But, as a rule, Tonquin is healthy, though the same cannot be said of Cochin-China proper, and especially of the French colony, the climate of which is extremely pestilent to Europeans. The country is composed of low alluvial flats, and the shores are everywhere fringed with mangrove-swamps, one of the most certain signs of the feverish malaria lurking in and beyond them.

The animals and plants of the region are much the same as those of the neighbouring countries. The royal tiger was formerly met with in the hills close to Saigon. The panther, rhinoceros, coca-nut bear, buffaloes, monkeys, &c., are common, but the elephant the Anamese have not yet learned to domesticate. Their chief beasts of burden are the buffalo, with which the unhealthy rice-fields are cultivated, and horses. Birds of numerous species are found; among others there is met with about every village that long-legged fowl of ungainly figure and monstrous appetite, which takes its name from the country, and the low damp region swarms with reptiles, frequently of a dangerous type. The vegetable products of the country are those usual to the tropics. The forests abound in fine timber trees, and as the people of Anam are essentially an agricultural race, rice, which forms the staple crop, is extensively cultivated; but cotton, mulberry, sugar-cane, maize, betel-nuts, pepper, &c., are also grown, and Tonquin is famous for its cinnamon. This part of the country also produces fair tea, but the people of Anam generally do not know how to prepare it. Among other arts they are skilful in inlaying work (p. 156). The country is believed to contain much mineral wealth—including gold, silver, zinc, and iron; coal is found in places, and though the alluvial plains of the lower parts of the country cannot be expected to be metalliferous, yet it is worked there. The natives are, however, exceedingly jealous of foreigners wishing to work their mines, and if questioned on the subject, always affect ignorance of their existence; hence the erroneous statements which have been hitherto made on the subject.

Huế, or Phu-tua-tien (p. 153), is the capital of the kingdom, and is remarkable chiefly as the seat of government and the place of residence of a variety of French officials, who fully control the king and his ministers. The inner town, or citadel, is occupied by "the government;" the outer by the general body of the population, whose numbers are estimated at from 50,000 to 100,000. But otherwise it is a very tumble-down and by no means imposing city. Hanoi, or Kecho, the ancient capital of Tonquin, was at one time a place of some note, but though it still possesses a large fortress, which serves as a residence for the Viceroy, it is now fast sinking into decay. Even the citadel, though, like that of Huế, built by European engineers, is falling into disrepair, and is so poorly equipped that were it at all likely ever to be attacked by modern artillery its surrender would simply be a question of a few days. The only other towns worthy of mention are Hai-dzoung, Bac-Ninh, Nam-Dinh, and Minh-binh, all of which possess fortifications of considerable importance; the castle of the last-named, though not on so vast a scale as the one which guards the capital, is yet the strongest in Tonquin.\*

\* Du Caillaux: "La France au Tong King" (1876); Chaigneau: "Souvenirs de Huế" (1886); Scott: "France and Tong King" (1885); Colquhoun: "The Truth about Tonquin" (1885); Veuillot: "La Cochinchine et la Tonquin"



## COCHIN-CHINA.

How "Cochin-chine française"—or "Basse Cochin-chine," as it is sometimes called—was acquired we have already explained. It is now divided into four provinces, constituted out of the six wrested from Anam. A great delta, with little variety of surface, and covered with mangroves in places where the water is absorbed by the spongy soil, much of it liable to overflow by the rivers, in some places below the level of the sea, it forms an uninviting place of abode. Europeans, M. Maunoir informs us, never get acclimatised here, and children born of European parents usually die soon after birth. Hence a race of Creoles is not likely to grow up in Cochin-China. The native women have, however, large families, and Anamites, it is often noted, recover from wounds which would be fatal to Europeans even in their own country. The vast plain which constitutes the area of the colony is so slight in its slope that the tide runs a long way inland, and so causes the borders of the rivers to be alternately covered with shallow water, and bare fetid mud-flats, exposed to the festering rays of the sun. Accordingly in this, a land of miasma, dysentery is the disease which, as in many other warm countries, shortens life. The majority of Europeans who die in Cochin-China succumb to it, and it is said that it frequently attacks them after their return to their native land. Cholera is also another epidemic of "Cochin-chine." On the border of the rivers fevers are very common, in the forest country the "wood fever" not even sparing the natives, who can live unharmed in the middle of the rice swamps. Yet the excellent commercial position of the country—only second in this respect to Singapore—as a *depôt*, on the one hand, for the trade of the middle provinces of China, and on the other for Siam, Cambodia, and the Malay Islands, renders it of value to the French Government. The colony cannot—owing to the circumstances mentioned—ever be a colony in the sense that Algiers is, but only a place of trade, and accordingly the number of Europeans in the country is not much increasing. In 1883 an official census put the entire population at 1,639,777, the minority made up of Cambodians, Chinese, and about 2,000 Europeans, exclusive of officials in the garrison. The rest were Anamites, Chams, a warlike, gay, honest people of Arab origin, much intermarried with Chinese, Hindoos, endless crosses of whites with the natives, Anamites with the Hindoo, with the Malay, and with the Cambodian, and above all Min-huongs, a numerous and interesting people of mixed Anamite and Chinese origin. The census of 1887 put the whole population of the colony at 1,642,182.\*

The capital of the country, as well as the chief "city," is Saigon. In reality it is made up of three quarters. The native town is devoted to a population of over 30,000 Anamites, Chinese, Malays, Tagals, and Hindoos. This is known as Cholen, and is at a distance of three miles from the European quarter, with which it is connected by a good road and by the "Grand Canal"—grand, as Mr. Thomson remarks, in name only, for its banks are overgrown with rank weeds, and the waters at high tide

(1859); and M. Maunoir's article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* with references. The last named, however, contains no allusion to the changes brought about by the treaty of 1874. In St. Martin's "L'Année Géographique" will be found lists of books on the country; and in 1867 M. du Bocage published a bibliography of its literature.

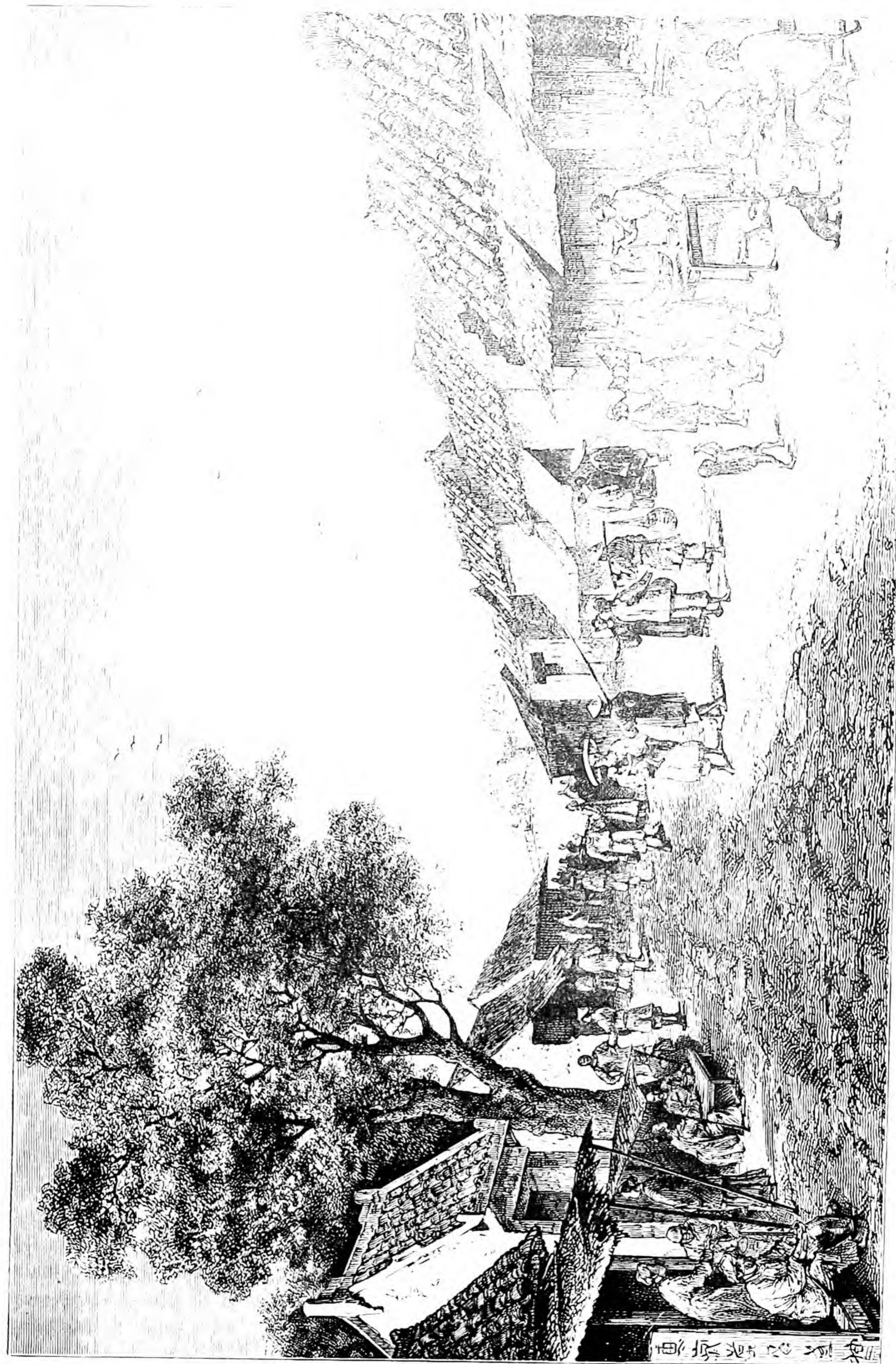
\* "Statistiques Coloniales pour l'année 1885" (1887).



are muddy, and at low tide mud. The Anamese towns are far from imposing, and the people who inhabit them are as little prepossessing as their frail huts. They bear the reputation of being the worst-built and least prepossessing of any of the natives of Indo-China. The Anamite's face is more Mongol-looking, his nose smaller and flatter, and his person dirtier even than is usual among a people not fond of water as a detergent. The great width between his legs at the upper portion gives his gait that curious swaggering "theatrical" appearance which enables any one at all acquainted with the Anamites to distinguish them among all the other races of Further India. It is also curious that the distance by which the big toe in this people is separated from the other toes has served—if any confidence is to be placed in the Chinese annals—to distinguish them for untold ages; and the Sinitic chronicles affect to mention their neighbours as early as 2285 B.C.! A vast portion of the poorer classes lives in boats grouped together along the river bank, so as to form a floating village, or in huts built on piles, which raise the floor a few feet above the surface of the water, into which all the refuse is thrown. "The capitalist, if he proposes to build a river residence of this sort—one offering every advantage to a large family in search of cheerful society, a commanding view of the stream, good fishing close at hand, unencumbered by tolls and ground rent, and boasting a drainage system so unelaborated and cheap—has to launch out the sum of two dollars and a half, or twelve shillings, in the construction and decoration of the edifice. When built, the proprietor will let it on a repairing lease." In Cholen the Chinese almost monopolise the trade, and though many of them settle permanently in the country, the majority return to China with the little fortune acquired by their frugal and not invariably honest ways. Choquan is a leafy village half-way between Saigon and Cholen, and the houses are so concealed by high hedges and foliage that Mr. Thomson remarks that he had several times passed through the heart of the hamlet before he was aware of the fact. The people here, indeed, love privacy; every prickly hedge that encompasses their dwellings is, to use the apt expression of the keen observer whose notes we have been drawing on, a token that the family within would rather be alone. Life is, indeed, in these sultry lands, one long *dolce far niente*, only occasionally interrupted by the mild necessity of getting something to eat.

Saigon proper—or the Government town (p. 157)—inhabited by the Government *employés*, is mainly built of brick, and possesses, among other institutions, an excellent botanical garden, and an interesting menagerie of the animals of the country. When the French first obtained possession of it the town was little better than a fishing village on the right bank of the Saigon river, twenty-five miles from the sea, and even yet the place does not at first sight predispose the visitor towards it. A large town-hall and hotel in one is the object most prominent to the eye, while *cafés*, by no means very clean or comfortable, at which most of the residents seem to take their meals, are numerous. The streets are broad and macadamised with brick, and in two of them which run at right angles to the river are stone canals, up which come country boats to load and unload. Oil lamps make the darkness of night visible, and wide gutters—which give forth evil odours—drain the surface refuse away. But there are no public squares, and unless the botanic gardens and the street facing the river, and lined with double rows of trees, are to be considered





THE MAIN STREET OF HUK, CAPITAL OF THE EMPIRE OF ANNAM.



as such, public promenades are equally marked by their absence. With the exception of a most imposing palace for the Governor, which contrasts strangely with its surrounding of bamboo huts in the midst of a tropical jungle, the public buildings of Saigon are in no way remarkable. There is, of course, a number of Roman Catholic chapels, and to aid the propaganda among the natives a large nunnery. There are also boulevards.

The trade of the place is not large. In 1884 the value of the imports of the whole colony was estimated at 21,500,000 francs, and the exports at 20,600,000 francs. But though there is a number of French houses, the English and Germans are the most active of the Saigon merchants; and, as usual in these parts of the East, the real work of the place is surrendered to the Chinese, who keep most of the small shops, and in some cases are also traders in a very considerable way of business. The French merchant enjoys life as well as life can be enjoyed in such a climate, and tries to make a little France about him. Hence, the *cafés*, the promenades, cards, dominoes, and a general addiction to fiddling, dancing, and pleasure, enter more than real business into his daily life. The 60 English, Germans, Spaniards, and Americans, who at the date of the latest accounts did business in Saigon, on the contrary, toil incessantly, hoping by harassing care, and sleepless nights passed in devising schemes for money-making, to heap up that competence which will enable them to pass as many years of their lives as possible in their native land. As for the natives, all this simply amuses them. The masters of the country, however, make the native chiefs responsible for their subjects; and hence rebellions against the French authority are much less frequent in Cochin-China than in most countries similarly situated—such as, for example, among the Chinese of Singapore, Penang, or the Malay Islands generally.

French is, of course, the language universally spoken in the town, and even the Anamites use it in their intercourse with foreigners. In Saigon—though the children of Europeans are usually sent home to complete their education, or, indeed, as soon after birth as practicable—there are in the town itself several good schools, largely attended by the Anamite and half-breed population. There is always a considerable naval and military force stationed here, and the police, who are chiefly Singapore Malays, are said to be very efficient. But though serious crime is not markedly common in the settlement, private morality is at the lowest ebb, and is, perhaps, in some respects, hardly better than that which prevails in such Oriental settlements as Dilli, in Timor (Vol. IV., p. 254), though the politeness of the Saigon colonist—not always, it may be remarked, a gentleman of the best home-antecedents—glosses over the most revolting features of life in a country that has no domesticity. Mì-thô, Vinh-long, and Bassac are the capitals of the three other provinces of the same names. At Mì-thô there is a large citadel with a considerable French and Anamite garrison, a palatial government residence, with fine pleasure-grounds, and good roads bordered with young cocoa-nut trees. When Mr. Vincent visited the place a few years ago, there were several French stores in the town, a large brick cathedral in course of construction, two or three gun-boats anchored abreast of the town, and “several important carriages in the streets.” Vinh-long is another town with a fort, and of the same character is Chaudoc. Ha-tien, on the Gulf of Siam, is an exceedingly unhealthy place, almost solely inhabited by Chinese



and Anamese. Ba-ria, at Cape St. Jacques, is a port chiefly of importance as a military station; while Go-cong, in the midst of the great rice-fields to the south-west of Saigon, is the market-town of a purely agricultural district, almost solely inhabited by Anamese.

The French colony in Cochin-China it would be unfair to have judged either by a Frenchman or an Englishman. The one individual, if endowed with even a modicum of the Chauvinism of his amiable nation, will be certain to speak in inflated language of France in Asia; while, if politically indisposed to the Napoleonic dynasty, he might be inclined to anathematise Cochin-China as one of the evil works of the "Décembriseur." A Briton, on the other hand, is apt to sneer at this attempt to run rivalry with us in the East. But no suspicion of undue leaning can attach to the opinion of Mr. Vincent, an American. Yet this intelligent witness declares that Cochin-China is a failure, and is likely to continue so. After seeing "the healthy, growing, and usually *paying* colonies of the British Empire in the East," a visit to Saigon "leaves a ludicrous impression indeed upon the mind of an observant, thinking, and reflecting traveller." The Mekong River has proved useless as an outlet to the rich districts of Southern China, the furious cataracts and currents rendering it impossible of navigation for any great distance; while, as the reader is already aware, not much better fortune has attended our efforts to tap the country by way of the Irawaddy. The Song-koi, which flows into the Gulf of Tonquin, is, however, navigable for nearly two hundred miles, and may aid in promoting the longed-for intercourse with the "celestial empire."\*

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## CHAPTER VII.

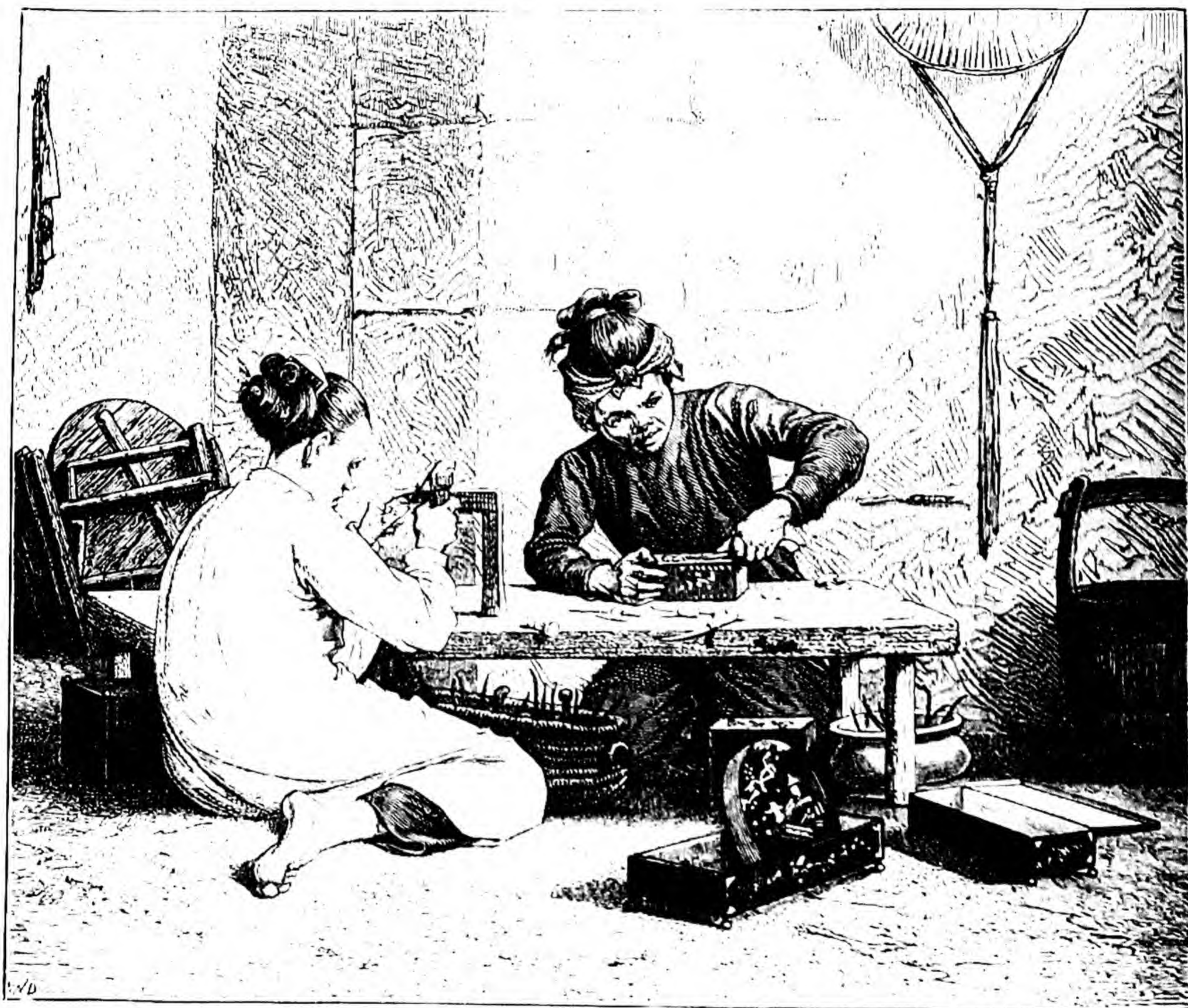
### INDIA: ITS SEAS AND ITS ISLANDS.

SAIGON, if not a pleasant place to live in, is happily an easy place to get away from. Steamers call in here from numerous ports east and west of it, and the traveller bound for India will have no difficulty in reaching some of the ports in the Bay of Bengal, either directly or by calling in at Singapore. From Saigon the voyager may sail to Singapore, and thence round the "Golden Chersonese," with its island-dotted shore, through the Straits of Malacca, he will once more emerge into the open sea laving the shores of the mighty "land of the Hindoo"—more familiarly known as India. He is among a strange people—black men of many races and tongues and faiths, "living under strange stars, writing strange characters from right to left," and whose gods are not those of the white-faced islanders whose lot it is to be their masters. But the Englishman is no longer in a foreign land. For some time yet, we shall travel in countries as little like Britain as any of those through which the reader has thus far been conducted. But wherever we go—among the languid millions of the great

\* Carné: "Travels in Indo-China and the Chinese Empire" (1872); *The Times* (London), Aug. 21st, 1884.



province of which Calcutta is the capital, through the country of the stern Rajputs, among the wild Goorkha horsemen, through the pleasant vale of Kashmir, or even in the land of the fierce Afghan tribesmen—we shall hear our own tongue, and find the “Sahib” lord. But before setting foot on the continent, we may sail a little while longer among the islands that lie off India, in the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Sea. The



ANAMITE WORKMEN INLAYING WITH MOTHER-OF-PEARL.

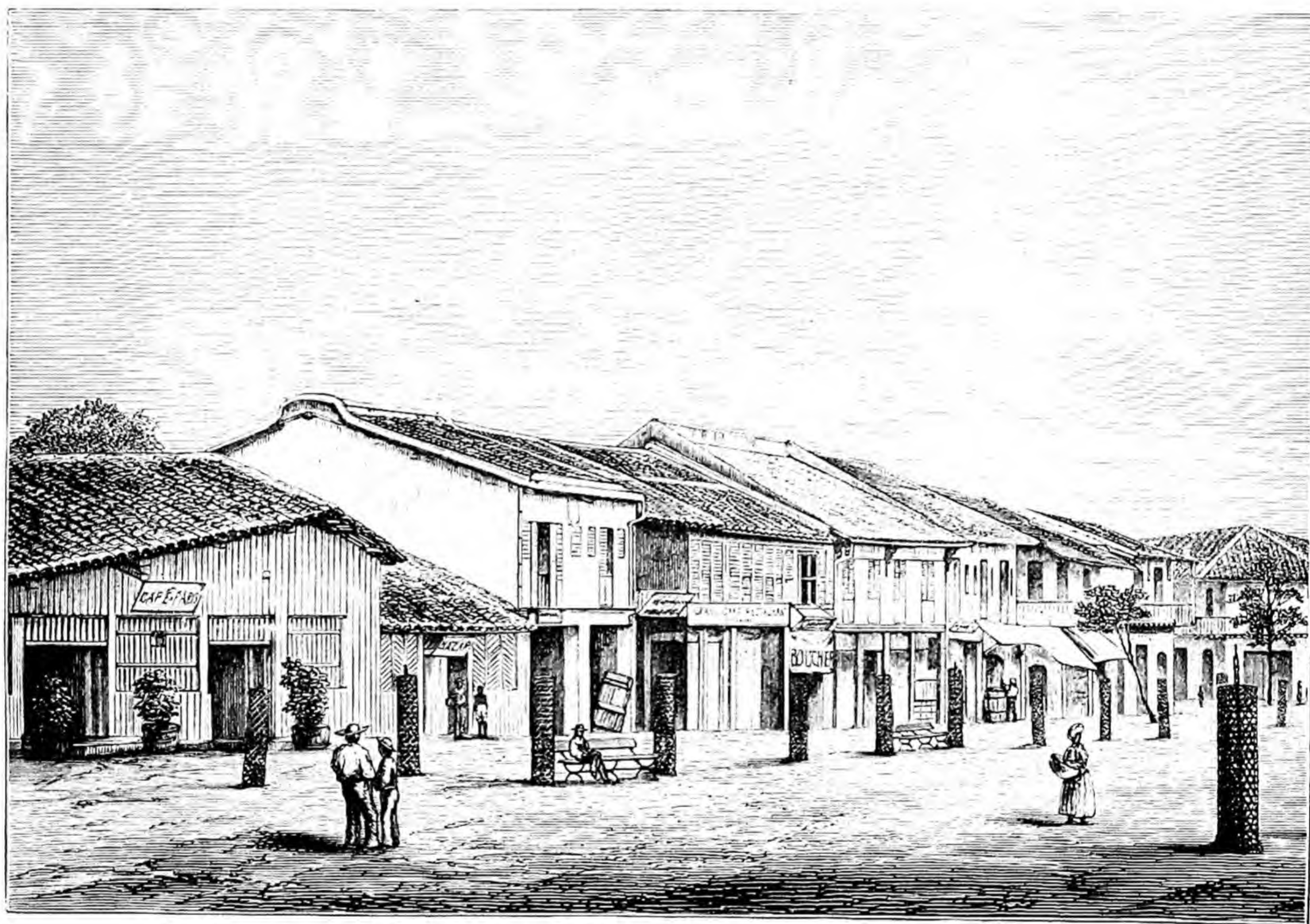
first-named sea, into which we have emerged from the Straits of Malacca, is a great stretch of almost unbroken water. From Balasore to Chittagong, the northern extremity of this ocean quadrangle, measures some 250 miles; while from Coromandel to Malacca, the southern side, is about five times that length. From India its waters receive the drainage of half of Southern Asia. The Ganges, the Brahmapootra, the Irawaddy, the Mahamuddy, the Godavery, the Kistna, and the Cauvery all flow into this great “bay,” while the extensive harbours on its eastern side attract ships from every part of the world. The climate of the bay is warm, the evaporation in the hot season sometimes amounting to one inch per diem; but the north-east and south-west monsoons—those modifications of the



trade winds—blow over it, often fiercely, while the wild typhoons which sometimes sweep its low alluvial shores leave great havoc in their track. But the Bay of Bengal is not an unbroken stretch of tropical sea. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie in it; and at the southern extremity, like the dot at the end of a point of exclamation—!—lies Ceylon, a rich island colony, also under British rule.

#### ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

From Cape Negrais to Acheen Head, in Sumatra, there lies a broken line of



STREET VIEW IN SAIGON.

islands, which point to the probability of this 700 mile curve, dotted here and there with the Nicobars, the Andamans, and the small Preparis and Coco Islands, having at one time been a bridge between Sumatra and India, of which only these imperfect fragments now remain. The Andamans are the chief links in this shadowy chain. The "Great Andaman" is, in reality, not one, but four islands, end to end, but close together, and each measuring from eleven to fifty-nine miles in length, the one being the largest. The Little Andaman is thirty miles long and about broad, and lies twenty-eight miles south of the others, but in addition to the mentioned, consists of a number of smaller islets in its close vicinity. In the sea, the Andamans appear like a number of low hills, densely



thick jungle of tropical forest. Saddle Mountain, in North Andaman, is 3,000 feet in height; but southward the hills sink, until they attain an inconsiderable elevation. The scenery of the islands is in places very beautiful, but as a rule the dense vegetation gives a sameness to the low-lying country. The shores of the bays are in most cases fringed with mangroves. Behind the mangroves rise palms, and in places, great forest-trees, their stems covered with climbers and their branches thick with clustered orchids. The west coast, however, has not, as a rule, such lofty trees; and the places where deciduous-leaved species prevail are, Colonel Yule remarks, of a "grey, sterile aspect during the hot season." Whole tracts are covered with the Andaman bamboo, out from among which, here and there, tall forest-trees rise; while in other districts the arborescent euphorbias, screw pines, and a species of *Cycas*, "give a remarkable aspect to the coast vegetation." Further in the interior the jungle is so dense that in places it is all but impossible to force a way, so that the geology of the country is very imperfectly known. Sandstone of a good building quality is found, and traces of coal are met with. The useful timbers are believed to be numerous, but as yet no trade is done in this reserve of Andaman wealth. The islands are too narrow to afford play for rivers; accordingly, though the general aspect of the vegetation is, according to Mr. Kurz, Burmese, it has been altered by the scarcity of running water and other unfavourable circumstances. Malay types not found in the neighbouring continent also occur, but there are no tree-ferns; and though edible fruits abound, the cocoa-nut palm, so abundant in the Cocos and Nicobars, is not indigenous here. Animal life in its higher forms is not common in the Andamans, and, as might be expected, mammals are especially few in number. None of the monkey tribe, so abundant on the mainland, have been detected in the group; and, indeed, with the exception of a peculiar rat with spiny hairs, a small fruit-eating bat, and a diminutive pig, believed to be identical with the one on the Nicobars, there are no members of this group of quadrupeds of any note. Birds are more numerous; but, according to the late Mr. Edward Blyth, they do not approximate so closely to the species of India as to those of the Malay Islands, the Philippines, and in one case even to China. The swallow which builds the famous edible nests inhabits caves on the coast, and pigeons, woodpeckers, and kingfishers are numerous. Reptiles and fishes are abundant, both as to individuals and species; and among the former is the turtle, which is imported in great numbers for the Calcutta market.

But the Andamans are never likely to be colonised by any visitors save those of the peculiar type for whose temporary home the Indian Government has selected them. In other words, the islands have since 1858 been a convict settlement, the only European residents being the officials, garrison, and possibly a stray white who may have "got trouble." The climate is very wet, and, indeed, only four months' fair weather relied on. When the convicts first arrived, the mortality among them was ; but of late, owing to the clearance of the jungle and the reclamation of s, the health of the settlement has wonderfully improved. It is also to be the presence of a civilised colony on the islands may in time react favourably ves. These are of a very low type; and though the islands are only 590



miles from the mouth of the Ganges and 160 from Cape Negrais, in British Borneo, and have been visited more or less for 2,000 years, the aborigines are to this day rude savages, who have never in even the least appreciable manner shared in the civilisation of the ancient empires off whose shores they live.\* Their very numbers are unknown, the different estimates varying so widely as to have put them at all figures, from 3,000 to 15,000. As early as 1789 the Bengal Government attempted to establish a penal colony on the islands, but the settlement was finally abandoned in 1796. But in 1855, owing to the repeated outrages by the natives on the crews of wrecked vessels, the scheme was again taken up; and though for a time it was interrupted by the Mutiny, the great number of prisoners who fell into the hands of the Government made its urgency evident as soon as that episode in the history of India had passed away. Accordingly, in 1858 the present colony in Port Blair was established. Cattle have been introduced, and large gardens have been laid out, in which mangoes, oranges, pommelos, pine-apples, and jack-fruit are grown in great luxuriance. In 1872 the Andamans obtained an unhappy notoriety as the scene of the murder of Lord Mayo, the Governor-General of India, when on a visit to the settlement. They and the Nicobars are governed by a Chief Commissioner, residing at Port Blair.†

#### THE NICOBAR ISLANDS.

Ser Marco Polo tells us that "when you leave the Island of Java (the lesser) and the Kingdom of Lambri, you sail north about 150 miles, and then you come to two islands, one of which is called Necuveran. In this island they have no king or chief, but live like beasts. And I tell you they go all naked, both men and women, and do not use the slightest covering of any kind. They are idolaters."‡ But long before the day of the great Venetian traveller, the Nicobars are mentioned in the earliest Sanskrit writings, being classed, like all islands placed in line, as the remains of bri made either by the gods or "by the devils for some particular purpose." Though in Jesuit priests went to the islands to convert the people (and got killed, after 2 years and a half), it was not until 1754 that the first settlement on them was made by Danish authorities, who in those days had a colony in India, not far from now stands. Fever, drunkenness, bad officers, improper food, indifference, quarrel with the natives, ended the experiment in a couple of years. Moravians landed; but in 1787 even these self-denying men, appointed by Danish authorities, had either left or died. Indeed, so rapidly did they succumb to the climate that they had not time to learn the language of the no natives. Still, up to 1807 (when England seized the islands) Denmark kept a small garrison there to play the part

\* "The Peoples of the World," Vol. II., pp. 123—127; Man:

† Mouat: "Adventures and Researches in the Andaman Islands" (1870); Hamilton: "New Account of the Andaman Islands" (1875); Man: "The Aboriginal Inhabitants of the

‡ "The Book of Ser Marco Polo," by Colonel Yule, Vol.



though this costly farce was enacted until 1831, there were no colonists on the islands; however, in that year another missionary attempt was made, and in 1837 this fresh departure also came to the old end. In 1845 a final attempt was made; but except that through it Dr. Rink, afterwards Governor of South Greenland, was enabled to write his account of the islands, the experiment ended miserably in 1848, and up to 1869 the islands were

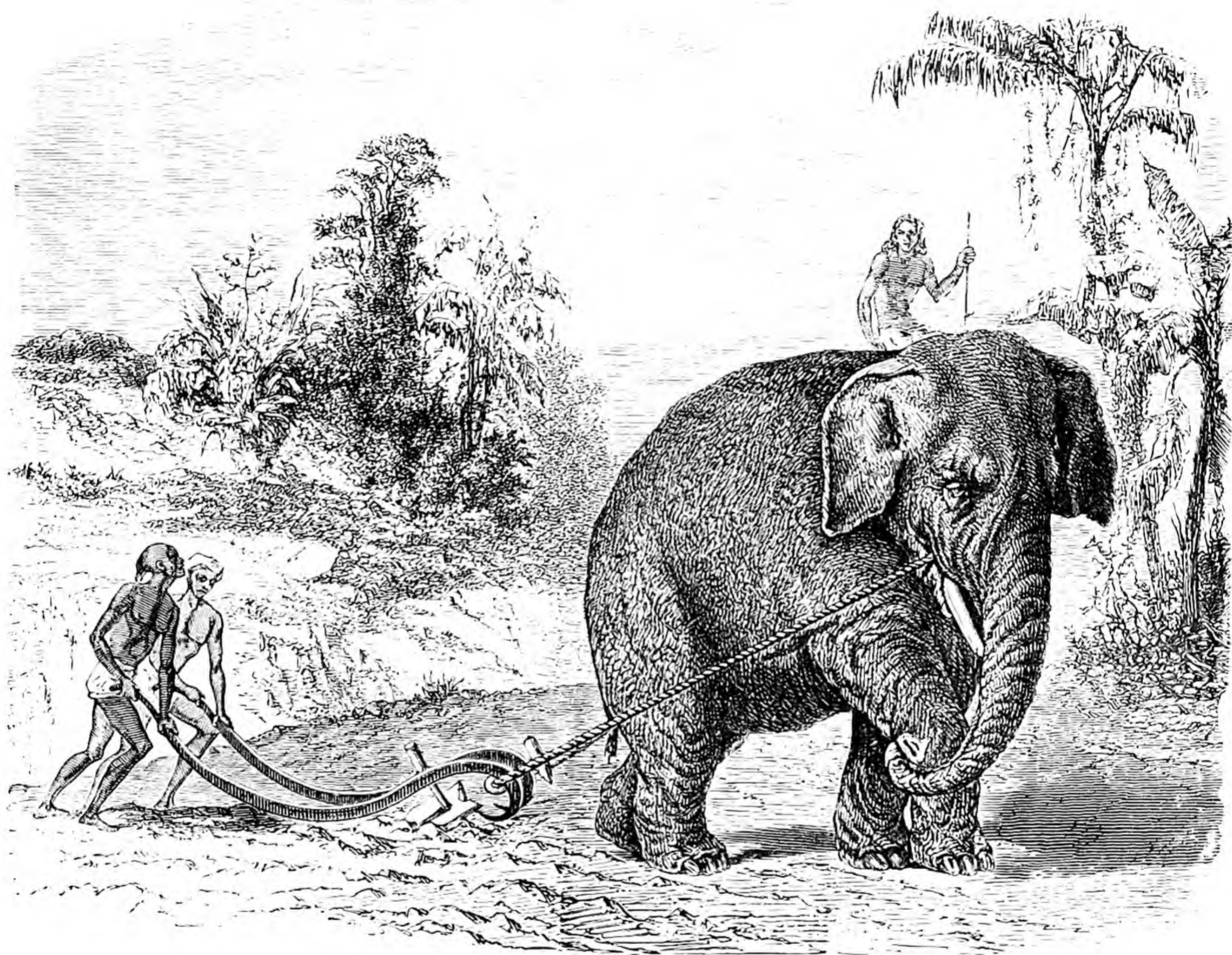


BULLOCK CARRIAGE IN COCHIN-CHINA.

on the long-suffering Danes had tired of the farce of keeping  
 tion which it was evident they could never make any use  
 res committed on seamen compelled the Government of  
 ; and in 1869 they were affiliated to the Port Blair  
 ns. Sepoys, convicts, and building materials were  
 since that date perseverance has been rewarded  
 ut appearance, with its barracks, stores, houses,  
 estilential swamps planted with cocoa-nut trees  
 nuts and the oil made from them form the



chief articles of commerce with the natives, who, unfortunately, have acquired a taste for arrack, brought from the Straits of Malacca by the small vessels which visit the islands for commercial purposes. The Nicobarians are infinitely more intelligent than the Andamans. M. de Röpstorff tells us that they are great linguists. The old men talk Portuguese, the middle-aged men English, the young men Burmese, the boys



ELEPHANT PLOUGHING IN CEYLON.

Hindustani, and everybody speaks Malay. This shows in whose hands the trade has been for the last sixty or seventy years, and how it has changed.

M. de Röpstorff had a good opinion of the Nicobars. They consist of eight larger and nine smaller islands, and from their position are all tropical; but the temperature, though debilitating, is uniform. The rainfall is about 100 inches per annum; but, as in the Andamans, it varies much in different years. Volcanic action has left its trace over the whole of the islands, and the washing down of the soil from the hills has formed swampy plains here and there. On this alluvium the writer whom we have just quoted describes mangroves as growing close to the sea, and on the ~~land~~ elevated



above high water-mark, screw-pine groves abound. All around the islands, more or less, a coralline alluvium has formed, and fringing reefs of coral stretch far out into the sea. The Great Nicobar, the Little Nicobar, and the Katchall are of "brown coral formation," but the other islands are of volcanic origin, and covered with a peculiar clay, full of minute shells, sharks' teeth, and whales' bones, proving that it must have been formed in the deep sea. The "brown coral formation" of Rink supports a luxurious jungle down to the very edge of the sea, while the islands of clay on volcanic rocks are only covered with high, useless "lalang" grass, which is fringed towards the sea with jungle. The coralline alluvium is covered with cocoa-nut trees, but the interior of each of the southern islands is still a *terra incognita*. "The jungle is high, and difficult to get through, interwoven with rattan and thorny creepers; and though magnificent to look at, it is very unhealthy. Into it no ray of light penetrates through the massive foliage of the giant trees; and without light no flower thrives." The colonisation of the Nicobars by the British has been more successful than the Danish attempts, in so far that proper stores, houses, &c., have been provided; but almost every fresh arrival has to undergo that seasoning operation which takes the form of catching an obstinate and dangerous jungle fever. "If," writes M. de Röpstorff, "once Government succeeds in making its little penal settlement healthy, settlers from Penang will not be wanting, and the place will soon thrive, for it lies in the highway of all the trade of Bengal. In this bay terrible hurricanes often meet the ships, and there is no harbour which could offer a better shelter than Nancowry. It is sheltered from all winds, and can be entered from the west or east. It could easily be provided with docks, as there are deep and sheltered bays. The cocoa-nuts which abound would offer the settlers something profitable to commence with, but the best profits would be from growing cotton and spices. The edible birds'-nests, which the Chinamen prize, would at once bring in a little revenue; and the guano in the subterranean caves of Katchall would be valuable for manure. There is not enough for exportation, but it would be useful for local purposes. The cotton grown at the Nicobars has been reported upon, and it appears that it is better than any Indian cotton. Every fruit planted there has succeeded well, and we know from the Danish settlement that spices thrive well. Hill paddy (rice) gave a very good crop in 1872, when it was experimentally grown. Building materials are plentiful; and I think it is only a question of time when the Nicobars will become a flourishing colony, and though one of the latest, perhaps not the least jewel in Her Majesty's crown." So little are the Nicobars known that it is only recently that the rumour has been verified that in the interior of the Great Nicobar there lives a tribe, not of Papuan or Negrito origin, as are the Nicobarians at large, but of Mongolian race. The population does not exceed 6,000.\*

\* Röpstorff: *Geographical Magazine*, Feb., 1875, p. 44, Feb., 1878, p. 39; Steen-Bille: "Corvetten Galathea's Jordomseiling" (1849); Rink: "Die Nikobarischen Inseln" (1847); Kurz: *Journal of Botany* (N.S.), Vol. IV., p. 321; Blyth: *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XV., p. 367; Rosen: "Erendringer fra mit ophold paa de Nikobarske Oer" (1839); Birch: *Calcutta Review*, July, 1878; and Distant: *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 1876, p. 209, where will be found a complete bibliography of the literature of the group up to date, with current statistical reports.

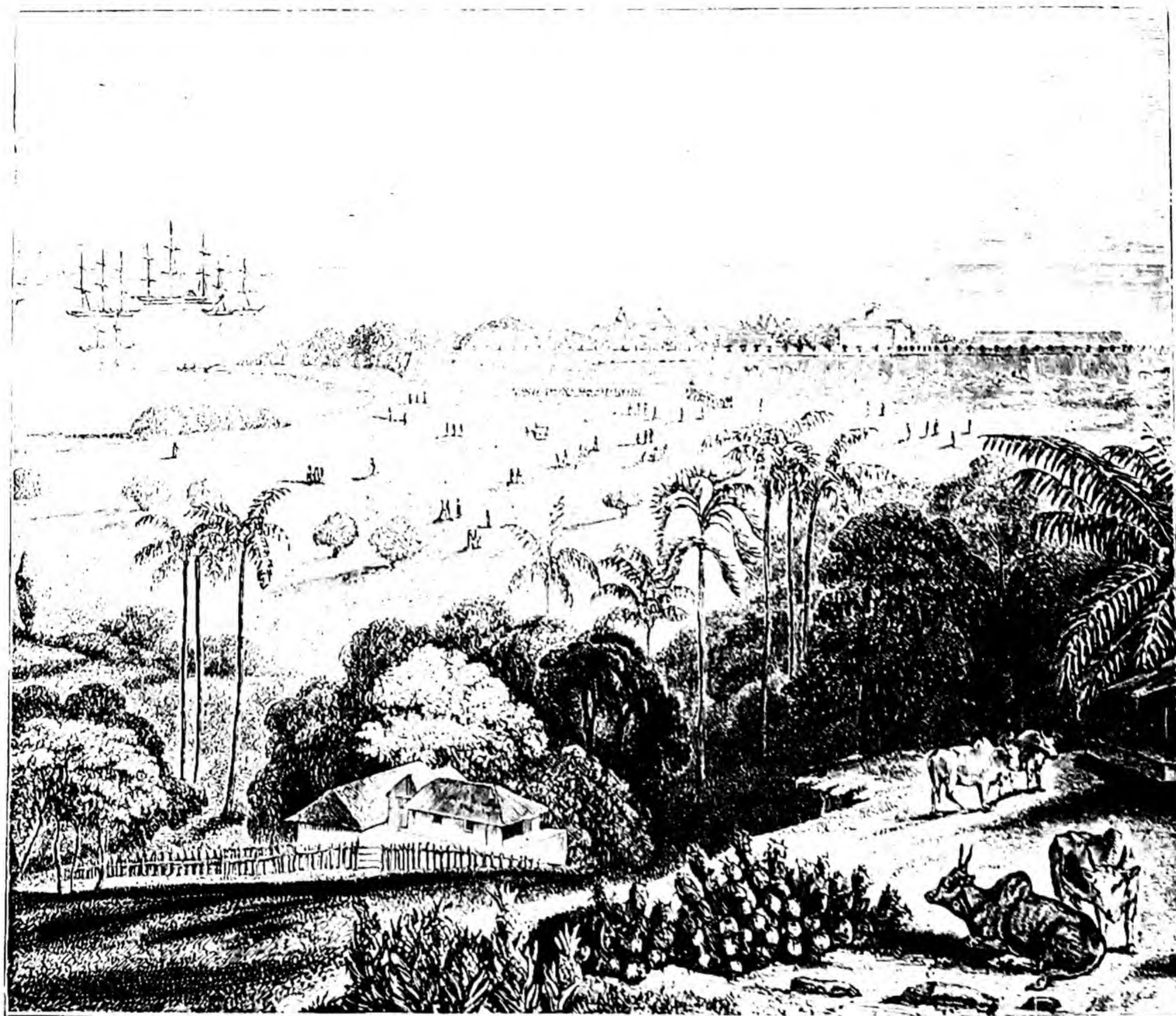


## CEYLON.

The voyager who approaches Ceylon from Europe usually sights it near break of day. The north-east monsoon is blowing, and Adam's Peak, 7,420 feet high, towering majestically above the other lofty mountains of which it forms a part, is generally visible; but the fleecy clouds which frequently hang around the summit conceal the cap of the holy mount of the Buddhists from view, though at other times it may often be seen sixty miles from land, looking at that distance like a pillar of smoke. But the cautious mariner, as he nears the coast of this famous island, gives the north-west shores of it a wide berth, for they are beset with shoals, sandbanks, rocks, and reefs. Some of these, like Adam's Bridge and the Island of Rameseram, almost bridge over Palk's Strait, which separates Ceylon from India. The west and south coasts are low, and fringed with cocoa-nut trees, which grow down to the water's edge, and impart to the island the beautiful appearance for which it is so justly celebrated. However, from Point de Galle (p. 164) to Trincomalee the shores are bold and precipitous. The ample vegetation which is characteristic of the coasts we have left is no longer found; a few dangerous rocks dot its shores, but the mariner may fearlessly approach this side of the island, though he will miss the "back waters" and inlets of the sea which on the south and west afforded so many useful harbours for small craft. The island is noted for its loveliness, and the numerous writers who have expatiated on its charms have in no degree exaggerated them. It would be impossible to do so; for though some of their data will not bear critical examination, in other respects they fail to come up to the reality. The eye of the voyager, wearied with the monotony of sea, tired of green waves and "barren foam," lights with relief on the varied expanse of verdure spread out before him, and listens with something like pleasure to the unwonted boom of the surf breaking on the flat beach, and sending its spray up to the very roots of the cocoa-nut trees. Colombo being an open roadstead, vessels must anchor at a considerable distance from the shore; but if the ship cannot come to them, the Singhalese come to the ship. Canoes and boats soon surround her, and up her sides clamber their crews, until the deck is covered with black, well-proportioned, but withal rather naked coolies. In the harbour itself the various native craft surrounding the new arrival supply abundant material for observation. Here is a Singhalese vessel, ark-like in form, and roofed over with thatch, which intensifies its domestic appearance; alongside it a Coromandel dhoney and a Bombay petamar; while, crossing and re-crossing the harbour, are cargo-boats heaped with lading for the vessels, "their swarthy rowers stimulating each other by a monotonous kind of chant; and the traveller lands amidst all the stir and confusion of an active commerce—crowds of coolies and bullock-carts, and piles of merchandise, rice, coffee, oil, and cinnamon." Ashore, the spectacle, especially to one coming from a long voyage, is still more pleasing. The landing-place at Colombo is very unlike the wharves in most ports with which the mariner is acquainted. Tulip-trees grow around the jetty and on each side of the principal streets, affording not only an agreeable shade from the tropical sun, but giving a garden-like appearance to the place, "their green leaves



contrasting vividly with the peculiar red hue of the roads, one of the first things that attracts the eye of a stranger.\* This "utmost Indian isle" of the old geographers has also been long celebrated for the aromatic odours which are supposed to herald it afar off. Its "spicy breezes" are, indeed, stock allusions with the poets who refer to Ceylon, the belief with these gentlemen being that because the island produces spices

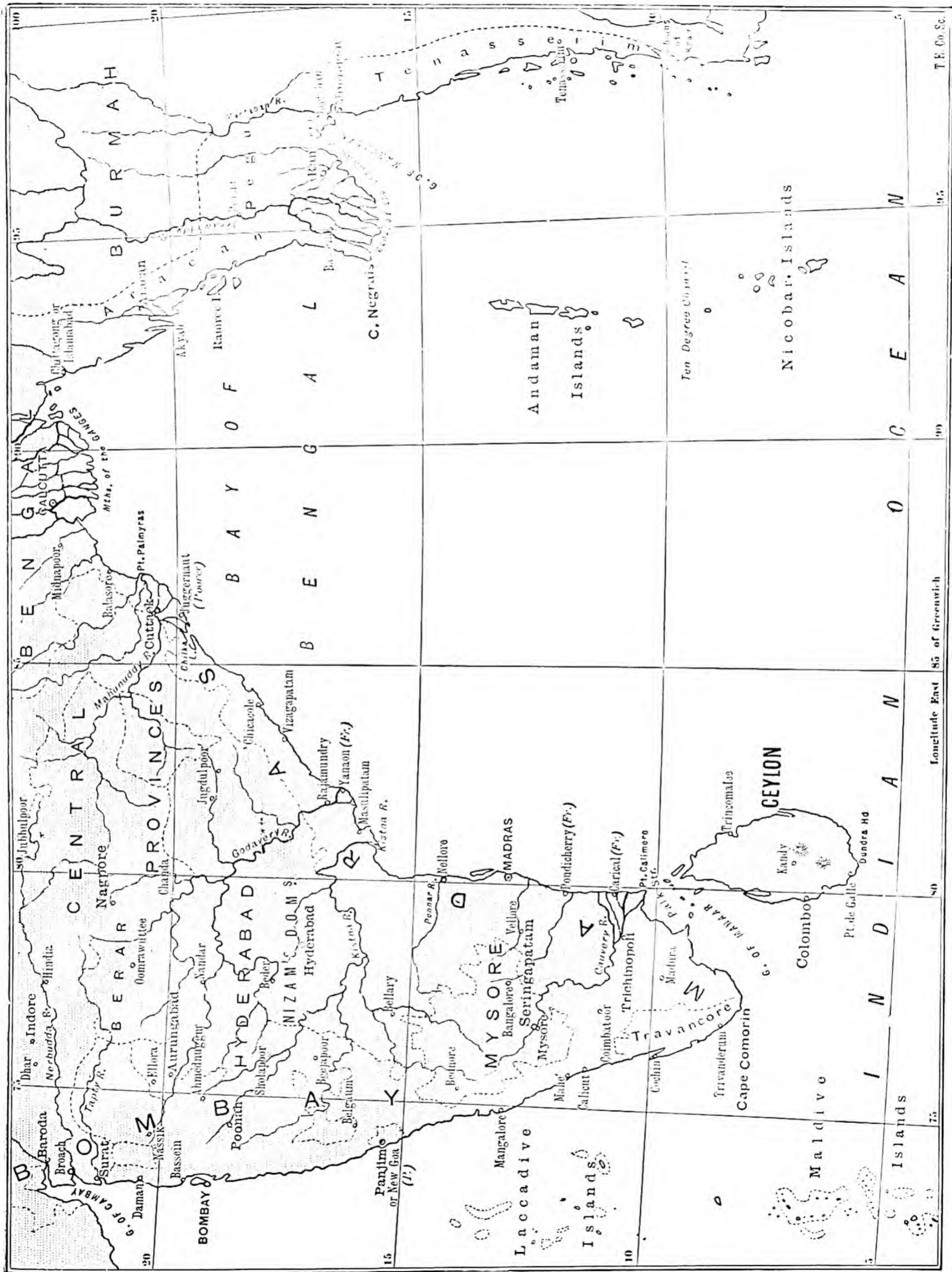


VIEW OF POINT DE GALLE, CEYLON.

the winds which blow over it must necessarily be impregnated with their perfumes. No doubt there is a certain odour in the air of the tropics—this the writer can confirm from his personal experience—just as there is in a pine-forest or on a Highland moor. But this has been much exaggerated; the only ones which at all correspond to those described by the writers—who have not visited Ceylon—are the overpowering perfumes exhaled by the lemon-grass (*Andropogon*), by the honey-scented nilla, and by

\* "Ceylon, by an Officer late of the Ceylon Rifles," Vol. I. (1876), p. 371. This exhaustive work, which the industrious author has seen fit to publish under a thin pseudonymic disguise, I shall in future quote as "Ceylon."





MAP OF SOUTHERN INDIA AND CEYLON.



the coffee-plantations, which when in full blossom send forth a jessamine odour. The cinnamon, however, exhales little scent until the leaves are crushed in the hand.

The low level of the coast-line gives the palms which encircle it the appearance of rising out of the ocean. But this level zone encircles a loftier region on the east, south, and west, extending inland from thirty to eighty miles, and forming a picturesque assemblage of hills, of which the most prominent, though not the loftiest, is Adam's Peak. This pre-eminence is claimed by Pedro-talla-galla, 8,295 feet in height, while there are two other mountains which surpass Adam's Peak in altitude, though in sanctity it maintains a dignity which none of them can pretend to. In Adam's Peak is a hollow which has the happy distinction of being equally revered by all the prevailing religionists of the island. The Brahmins declare that it is the footprint of Siva, the Buddhists that Buddha made it, the Mahommedans that it is the work of Adam, while the Christians are divided in opinions between the claims of St. Thomas and the eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. Hence pilgrims crowd the mountain at certain periods of the year. The footprint is covered by a roof, and the superstition of the devotees administered to by priests, who live in a monastery half-way up, but daily attend the shrine on the summit. March is the favourite season for the climbing pilgrimage—one, moreover, which is not devoid of danger, and has to be aided by chains riveted to the rocks at critical places, and fabled to have been placed there by Alexander the Great. In addition to money and other gifts, the worship at the summit consists of offerings of rhododendron flowers and various invocations. Notwithstanding the various religions of the pilgrims, they agree to differ about the origin of the footprint, and once there, get along without discord of any kind, the awe which the sacred spot inspires, and the sublimity of the view from the summit, apparently quelling in the pilgrims' breasts the contentions usual among sectaries of such pronounced views. Indeed, the spectacle from Adam's Peak is by general consensus one of the most sublime in the world. Sir James Emerson Tennent has very justly remarked that though people climb many mountains much higher, there are few which present so unobstructed a view over land, or tower so much over the surrounding mountains. "On the north and east," the author of "Ceylon" remarks, "the eye ranges over the Kandyan hills. Turning to the south and west are undulating plains of light and verdure, with rivers showing out at intervals in their silvery course, while in the extreme distance the glitter of the sun on the surf marks the line of the coast. This grand view is frequently eclipsed by clouds or dense mists which envelop the summit, when neither land nor sky can be seen; the mountain appears to melt under your feet, and you feel suddenly lost in a cloud, without a footing on earth. The sensation which it produces is very peculiar, and must be felt to be understood." The mountain region of Ceylon covers an area of about 4,300 miles, but the whole breadth of the island on the north, from Kalpitiya to Batticola, is an almost unbroken plain, covered with noble forests of many trees, from the cashew-nut, which decays a month after it is felled, to the ebony and satin-wood, which can alone resist for any great length of time the climate and white ants of Ceylon. The latter insect pests are ubiquitous except when the climate is too cold for them, and in a few hours destroy every



vegetable substance within their reach. All of the mountains are covered with verdure to their summits; but the slopes of many of them, once clothed with great forest trees, have been cleared, and turned into finely cultivated coffee-plantations. Among these mountains are some extensive plains, such as those of Horton, 7,000 feet above the sea. But as this splendid site for a sanatorium is at present difficult to reach, that of Newera-Ellia, 6,240 feet high, has taken its place, the locality being distant only 112 miles from Colombo. Here the European, jaded with the heat of the coast and plains, where a single sheet at night feels too much, may regain somewhat of his lost vigour, and as he sits by a fire, and finds blankets necessary, begin to get new life into his languid, flabby limbs. He awakes after a refreshing sleep, and sees "the grass white with hoar-frost, and hears the voice of the robin and the blackbird near his window. If an early riser, the new arrival takes a stroll before breakfast, feels the crisp grass and leaves crackling under his feet, expands his chest, and inhales the pure air with a degree of delight only understood by those who have felt the magical change, returning to breakfast with a sharp appetite and a vigour of limb almost forgotten. Clothing which makes one hot to look at in Colombo is here donned with pleasure, and we are glad to sit near a fire at breakfast and in the evenings." Since the increased facilities for travel Newera-Ellia is yearly visited by numbers of Europeans, and the place is fast becoming a Singhalese Simla, or an insular representative of one of those sanatoria in the Neilgherry Hills to which the jaded Indian flees during the "heats." Many English flowers and vegetables grow to perfection; and though wheat and other cereals have not succeeded very well, potatoes are grown in such quantities, in spite of the introduction of the potato disease, as to have become a considerable source of profit. Sir Samuel Baker, who, prior to the days when he attained the acme of his fame as a traveller, lived several years in Newera-Ellia,\* advocates European colonisation of the mountains of Ceylon; but, even with its comparative advantages of climate, the European constitution, anywhere in a tropical climate, becomes most frequently too enervated to be capable of much exertion. Ceylon comprises an area of 24,700 miles, is 271 miles long, and at the widest part is 137 miles broad—in other words, it is about one-sixth smaller than Ireland, though altogether different in shape, being cone-shaped, with the apex of the cone pointing towards the north. The Hindoo poets call it "the pendant jewel of India:" the more prosaic Dutch compared it to a ham.

However, in spite of Ceylon being so near India, it is probable that it has never formed a part of the continent of Asia as at present constituted. The Ceylon elephant is specifically identical with that of India, but at the same time its variety is nearer that of Sumatra than that of the continent. But in Ceylon we do not find the tiger, hyæna, cheetah, wolf, fox, various deer, birds, &c., common in India, while several of the Ceylon animals are wanting on the other side of Palk's Straits; and some of the insects have more affinity with those of Australia than of India. On the other hand, the likeness to the fauna of the Indian Archipelago is almost as superficial, for many

\* Baker: "Eight Years' Wanderings in Ceylon" (1855); Tennent: "Ceylon" (1860); Sirr: "Ceylon and the Cingalese" (1851), and the numerous other works referred to in these books.



Malay forms, such as the argus pheasant (Vol. IV., p. 219) and the rhinoceros of Sumatra, are absent. The gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is not now found in Ceylon, though at one time it seems to have been present. On the whole, the facts we are in possession of do not point to Ceylon having ever been actually joined to Sumatra, nor to India, but to its having been part of a southern continent now nearly all submerged, and of which Southern India, then entirely disconnected from Northern India, was a portion. Though heavy rains usher in the changes of season, and swell the rivers to great dimensions, after the rains are over these streams fall back to such narrow proportions that under normal circumstances there are few rivers in the island which cannot be forded on horseback. The lakes are numerous, and some of considerable magnitude. Some of these, like those of Colombo and Negombo, are formed by the embouchures of rivers having become closed by an accumulation of silt, &c., without, to employ Mr. Dickson's words, "the rivers, swollen by the rain, forcing new openings for themselves, and having their ancient channels converted into lakes." The long, low embankments of sand, both on the east and west coast—locally known as "gobbs"—are formed in this manner. They are often several miles in breadth, and are covered with thriving cocoa-nut plantations. There are also some lakes artificially formed, which play an active part in irrigation, and in the system of canals which the Dutch, following the natural bent of their genius, constructed in various coast-lying districts during their occupation of the country.

As the seasons of Ceylon do not differ widely from those prevailing along the shores of the Indian peninsula, it is needless to enter into this portion of our subject in much detail. The south-west monsoon begins to blow along the south-west coast between the 10th and 20th of May, and the north-east monsoon appears on the north-east coast between the end of October and the middle of November. But while the south-west side of the island is deluged by rain, owing to the moist breezes impinging on the mountains, the opposite shore may be suffering from drought; and not unfrequently, it is said, the opposite sides of the same mountain may be suffering at the same time, the one from an overplus of rain, the other from having none at all. Owing to the proximity of the island to the equator, the length of the day does not vary more than an hour all the year round, and, as happens under these circumstances, dawn and twilight are of brief duration, and their pleasures consequently little, if at all, experienced.

Coal, with the exception of a little anthracite, has not yet been found in Ceylon, but in all likelihood it awaits some future explorer; but plumbago forms a considerable item in the island exports, and the Singhalese have from time immemorial been in the habit of manufacturing rude tools of fine temper out of the excellent iron which exists in such vast quantities in the western, southern, and central provinces. Tin, platinum, copper, black oxide of manganese, nitre, nitrate of lime, salt, &c., are all found, and, in some cases—as, for example, in that of salt—worked as a Government monopoly, to the not inconsiderable benefit of the revenue, though perhaps not of the natives. The soil of the ground is not uniformly rich, but there is yet a vast amount of country covered with swamp or jungle capable of being cultivated. Agriculture is yet the chief occupation of the natives; but it is evident, from the irrigation works which have been allowed to fall





COCOA-NUT PLANTATION IN CEYLON.



into decay, they have at one time been much more skilful cultivators than at present. Cinnamon is indigenous, and at one period formed the principal article of export, but coffee is now extensively grown, as well as tobacco, cinchona, and cacao. Among other crops, tea has been introduced, and promises to become a profitable plant. But cocoa-nut culture is among the natives the great "industry." A European does not find this kind of farm a profitable investment for his capital, but to a Singhalese the cocoa-nut grove around his house is an independence. It furnishes all he requires for food, clothing, drink, and timber; and after he has lived sumptuously all the days of his life on the nuts and the sap, the trunk, hollowed out, makes a very comfortable coffin. Altogether, it has been calculated that, apart from the area devoted to the Areca and Palmyra palms, the cocoa-nut culture in the hands of Europeans or natives occupies about 560,000 acres of Singhalese soil (p. 169); tea, 100,000; cinnamon, 35,000; rice, 600,000; coffee, 300,000; and cinchona, 33,000 acres.

There are no native manufactures except of the most primitive kind, though the gold chain work and the imitations of gems are really very beautiful. For a "sapphire," hardly to be distinguished from the real stone at first sight, a ragged native will calmly ask the fresh arrival, or by choice the visitor who is just departing, from 400 to 4,000 rupees, and at the last moment joyously accept the fourpence, which is somewhat over its value. Though cinnamon, tea, and coffee are all more important sources of Singhalese wealth, yet the famous pearl-fisheries of the island are most associated in the popular mind with its fame. The chief banks are near Arippe, off the northern part of the west coast, at a distance of six to twelve miles from the shore, but though of great extent, they vary in their yield. The banks are monopolies of the Government, who sell the privilege of fishing them by public auction. But owing to causes never clearly explained, though it has been attributed to the migratory character of the oyster (*Meleagrina margaritifera*), the business is a rather precarious one, altogether apart from the fact that the divers must run the risk of bringing to the surface many oysters which are of little or no value for one which contains the precious pearl loose in its "mantle." Since the Government sold the privilege of fishing the beds, the oysters have been disposed of as they come ashore from the boats, with the result that the returns vary from £87,000, the highest in any one year, to £7,200, which was the net revenue in 1874, though in the year 1881 £59,900 were derived from it. These are the official figures, and give a fair idea of the fluctuating character of this source of Ceylon revenue (which is, indeed, so old that it is mentioned in a chronicle dating 306 years B.C.). The common impression that the beds are worked by the Government directly is erroneous. As soon as it is decided that there will be a fishery, the privilege is disposed of at Colombo to the highest bidder. The purchasers of this concession are generally Moors, Tamils, or Banian merchants, who now and then lose heavily by it. Such a case occurred in 1844, when the calculations which the experts profess to be able to make failed so egregiously that the Government remitted one-third of the money to the renter. On the other hand, in 1857 the speculators combined to bid low. Accordingly, though only £20,309 were obtained for the rental of the banks, an enormous quantity of oysters were landed, and the Government, in chagrin at being



duped, threatened to stop the fishery altogether. Indeed, during the off-season a close watch has to be kept, either by a vessel stationed on the banks or by guards on the shore, to prevent poaching on these curious sea-preserves. The fishery commences at a period varying from March to May, but never later than that month, when the little villages of Arippe and Condatchy become the headquarters of the divers, the speculators, and the motley crowd who hie from far and near to profit by the money which for a few weeks is scattered so freely by those engaged in the business. The country about Arippe is naturally very dreary. Water is scarce away from the river, which flows into the sea at this place, and with the exception of a few detached palms, a thorny, scattered jungle is the only vegetation, extending behind the long sandy beach. Yet here from time immemorial has congregated for the one month during which the fishery lasts a queer multitude, numbering, it is said, upwards of one thousand, from all parts of Asia. At this season the author of "Ceylon" describes the vicinity as assuming the appearance of a vast fair. The dwellings are only temporary. Sheds, built of boards, palm-leaves, cotton-cloth, and straw, rise as if by magic on the barren sand; and the region so desolate a few days previously is thronged by a crowd of snake-charmers, jugglers, dancing girls, fakirs, whose revolting features enable them to prosper on the superstition of the crowd, and the vagabondage of half of Southern Asia, the variety of whose costume, features, tongues, and roguery affords endless subjects for the student of mankind and the artist's pencil. On the banks swarm canoes and dhoneys of all sizes, most of which come from the opposite shores of India with provisions and other goods to supply the wants of the multitude who inhabit the impromptu bazaar-like town ashore. Finally, the strong detachment of Malay police and military sent from Colombo is absolutely necessary to keep order in such a gathering.

The divers are principally Malabars from Cape Comorin, in India, but a few come from the Persian Gulf. They all wear amulets against sharks; and until recently the Government had to maintain a Kadal-Katti, or "shark-binder," whose business it was to supply the credulous pearl-divers with charms against their powerful submarine enemy. Indeed, this functionary holds an office which is hereditary in his family; and the fact that in 1847 he was a Roman Catholic seemed, Sir J. Emerson Tennent tells us, in no way to have impaired the virtue of his charms in the eyes of his patrons. The oysters, when brought ashore, are sold by the thousand to small speculators, who, in their turn, either take the risk themselves, or dispose of smaller quantities to still humbler adventurers. Indeed, few of those who camp on Arippe beach during the fishing season do not venture from a few pence to several pounds in the prevailing lottery. The smaller dealers usually open them on the spot, but most frequently the oysters are placed in hollow enclosures, covered with sheds, and fenced round and guarded to prevent pilfering. There they are allowed to remain until they rot, when the pearls, if any, are sought for. It is needless to say that the putrefaction of such an immense quantity of shell-fish fills the air with an abominable odour for miles around, and nurtures vast swarms of flies, which blacken the air, and cover every article of food, furniture, and clothing. At first this horrible smell produces nausea, but after a time the stomach gets accustomed to it, and some optimists will even declare that it sharpens



the appetite. It does not, however, seem to be injurious to health, for mortality is not higher at Arippe than among the crowded population of the native towns.

The trade of Ceylon is steadily increasing. In 1886 its imports were valued at £1,087,932, and its exports at £3,381,412, its commercial intercourse being mainly with India and Great Britain. Coffee, cinnamon, and cocoa-nut oil are the chief articles sent out of



SINGHALESE DANCER.



MOORISH CLOTH SELLER OF CEYLON.

the country ; for, of course, the pearls, though intrinsically valuable, do not figure in Custom House schedules, and leave the island in small quantities and for the most part in private hands. Tea, cinchona, cardamoms, cacao, plumbago, tobacco, &c., are also extensively exported.

The population is reckoned to be verging close on three millions. Of these the Singhalese are by far the most numerous ; but Tamils, Moors, or descendants of the Arab settlers, Malays, and other Asiatics are numerous. The European and other half-caste descendants do not number over twenty-four thousand, the actual European settlers not being over a fifth as many, while the Veddas and Rodyas are wild tribes, about whom very little is known. The majority of the people are Buddhists



of the strictest type, but there are Sivites, one of the Hindoo faiths, in large numbers, Roman Catholics, Mohammedans, and Protestants of various sects. Missionaries have for long laboured in the country, though, as the vast majority of the Christians belong to the population of European descent, their efforts have not proved very successful. The Singhalese, it is needless to say, are not barbarians. Among them a high civilisation has long existed, though under their earlier native kings they had attained a loftier grade of culture than in later times. In 1505 the decadence of native rule



"BURGHERS" OF CEYLON.



SINGHALESE OF THE COAST.

began by the Portuguese settling in the country. There they remained until, in the course of the next century, the Dutch gained a footing, and ousted the "Portugals." The Netherlands in their turn had to yield to the British, who in 1795-6 annexed the foreign settlements in the island to the Presidency of Madras, and two years later erected them into a separate colony. The inevitable, of course, soon followed. The last of the "Kings of Kandy," having made himself objectionable, was taken prisoner, and with him ended in exile that long line of sovereigns whose pedigree could be traced back for nearly 2,000 years. Since that date the British have exercised complete and— with the exception of three outbreaks, only one of which was, however, of importance— undisputed mastery of the island. Under our rule the condition of the population has improved and the prosperity of the country increased. Roads are being rapidly made all over the



island, and 180 miles of railway have already been completed. The six provinces are administered as a Crown colony by a governor, aided by executive and legislative councils, the actual officials being members of the Ceylon Civil Service, a very highly trained body of "competition wallahs." The revenue was in 1886—a fair average year—£1,182,301; and though heavy debts have at various times been incurred for the construction of public works, they are being so rapidly extinguished that at the end of 1885 the debt amounted to £2,281,091.\* In addition to schools under various missionary societies, the Government maintains a number in the villages throughout the island, and pays large sums "on results" to those supported by private organisations.

There are numerous towns scattered over the colony, both in the interior and on the coast, but the only ones of any size are Colombo (121,000), which we have already mentioned, Galle (47,059), Jaffna (34,864), and Kandy. Though once the capital of the country, Kandy has now sunk into insignificance. It is picturesquely situated on the border of a small artificial lake, surrounded by wooded hills, at the base of which a road runs around the lake, and forms the favourite evening drive of the inhabitants. Between the lake and the town there is also an esplanade, and in the lake a tiny island, on which in former days the Kings of Kandy kept their wives. The more prosaic English have converted this Agapemone into a powder-magazine. Kandy seems never at any time to have been an imposing town. The ruins of the king's palace indicate a mean building, while the rest of the town is made up of mud huts, the monarchs having reserved the luxuries of windows and tiles for themselves. The temples, which were at one time numerous here, are also falling into ruins—the most elegant now standing being that containing the "tooth of Buddha"—but since the arrival of the English many substantial houses have been built, and the poorer natives have taken to the suburbs. Some of these parts of the town are densely crowded, especially along the road to Peradenia, which is studded on each side for mile after mile with huts, bazaars, and gardens. The place does not bear the best of reputations for healthiness, and was formerly terribly infested by snakes. There is, however, a good botanic garden at Peradenia, and the fine Government House adds a little loveliness to this dull, hot Singhalese city. In a climate so warm athletic amusements must necessarily be limited; but being an English dependency, of course a club is among its "institutions," and where ladies live there are, it is needless to say, balls also, and the usual pastimes which our race carry with them all over the world. At Newera-Ellia two packs of hounds are kept: one is employed in hunting the great elk, which, though abundant in the neighbourhood affords but poor sport, owing to its habit of taking to the water as soon as it can; the other is a pack of harriers. The land-leeches, which are the pest of Ceylon, especially after rain, are very troublesome alike to horses, men, and hounds. "Leech gaiters" are worn by planters, and though efficacious enough in keeping off some of the species, one of the kinds (*Hamadipsa ceylanica*) which frequents the damp jungles climbs up the legs and gets inside the clothes, and can spring on the passer-by from among the leaves. The "rest-houses," which

\* Ferguson's "Ceylon Directory and Handbook" (1886).



are built for the accommodation of travellers on the Ceylon roads, are often infested with them, and the writer whom I have already so often quoted mentions that wayfarers have been driven out of the one at Kaigalle by these sanguinary annelids, and that they have been known to draw blood from people in their palanquin carriages. The railway route from Kandy to Colombo is one of the most beautiful in the world. Near the sea the line runs across jungle and plains, but the latter portion gradually ascends, until the passenger can peep out of the carriage windows at rich tropical vegetation, not only around him but in the valleys below, and at "distant mountains shimmering in the glare and blaze of the burning sun." Colombo itself is a European-looking town, very pleasant in itself; while from Wockwalla, a hill commanding the plain, and a favourite drive of the inhabitants, can be obtained a view over "paddy-fields, jungle, and virgin forest, up to the hills close by and to the mountains beyond, which it would be difficult to surpass in the tropics."\* Trincomalee is noted for its spacious harbour; and Galle (p. 161), though within six degrees of the equator, is healthier than most of the tropical stations, and has a fair harbour, though small, and with coral-reefs scattered over its entrance. Point Pedro, the harbour of Jaffna, is an open roadstead, with tolerable shelter behind the coral-reefs; but the coast is dangerous during the prevalence of the north-east monsoon.† Altogether, in spite of the fungus which is preying on the coffee-leaves, the beetle that bores into its stem, the "bug" which makes its home in its bark, and the rat which eats its buds and blossoms, Ceylon is prospering fairly well. The mania for coffee-planting, which for a time threatened ruin to the island, and actually caused great loss, has now abated, and as other crops are being cautiously introduced, a rich future evidently awaits this tropical dependency—for colony it cannot really be called—of England. Ceylon has, moreover, dependencies of its own, though to these our space will only admit of a few words being devoted.

#### THE MALDIVES.

They are governed by their own Sultan, who, however, acknowledges his suzerainty to Ceylon by sending every year a present to the governor, a courtesy which is returned by the gift of a piece of red cloth. This custom dates, perhaps, from the period of the Chinese supremacy in Ceylon—that is, from A.D. 1430. The curious vessels of the Maldives are sometimes seen in the Ceylon harbours laden with cocoa-nuts, coir, and cowries, or with dried fish intended for the Indian market. The cowries are, in their turn, despatched to West Africa, where they are used—but nothing like to the old extent—in lieu of money. At one time they were worth £20 per ton, but they are nowadays of less value. The coral soil of the Maldives is rich, millet grows well, and banyan trees, bread-fruit, tamarinds, and various other fruits and vegetables flourish. Cocoa-nut trees cover them so densely that the voyager is quite close to them before anything can be seen, and even then the view is only that of a forest of the favourite tree of the low-lying Atolls. The dominant race is of Arab descent, but the other is evidently more or less

\* Lady Brassey: "Voyage of the *Sunbeam*," p. 195.

† "Ceylon," Vol. I., p. 68.



aboriginal, though their origin is unknown, and both are strict Mohammedans. The Europeans have formed no settlements, for the prospects of trade are not so brisk as to counterbalance the fact of the climate being particularly unhealthy, dropsical complaints and disorders of the bowels being very common, and particularly fatal to strangers.

#### COCOS OR KEELING ISLANDS.

This little group has been annexed by the Ceylon Government. They were discovered in 1608-9 by Captain William Keeling, of the East India Company's service, but the first settler on the group was, perhaps, Captain Ross, who in 1825 came there, and whose grandson—Mr. G. C. Ross—is virtual governor of these lonely tropical isles. There is a considerable number of inhabitants on the islands, but very few Europeans. Cocoa-nut oil is the chief article of trade, but cyclones sometimes desolate the islands, sweeping over them with such force as to carry trees, houses, grass—everything, before them. But the experiment of colonising the Cocos has been more favourable than might have been expected, since the climate is temperate and is reported to be extremely healthy. When Captain Ross first arrived the islands were for the most part covered with brush; but much of this has been cleared away, and the ground planted with cocoa-nut trees and other crops, with the result that a considerable trade is carried on with Java and the neighbouring countries. Mr. Forbes, who is a modern visitor, speaks of the islands as belonging to the Ross family. But this phrase is, we suppose, only to be understood in the sense that their present representative is the chief trader on the group.\*

#### THE LACCADIVES.

The "Lakara-Divh," or "Hundred Thousand Isles"—as the natives call them—were discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1499, but at present they are attached to the district of Cananore, in the Presidency of Madras, to which they pay a tribute of about £1,000 per annum. The population numbers over 7,000, and are known as Moplays. They are of Arabian origin, and, like the people of the Maldives, are all Mohammedans, though not of a strict type. The rearing of a small breed of cattle, cocoa-nuts, rice, betel-nuts, sweet potatoes, and other vegetables, is their chief occupation, but the islands, seventeen in number, are of little value. They are composed of coral, and hence are mostly low, with deep water all around them, and on that account are dreaded by navigators of the Arabian Sea.

We are now within 150 miles of the Malabar coast, having skirted the shores of India from Burmah to near the entrance of the Persian Gulf. It is but a short way to the continent again, and of that portion of Asia which we have as yet not visited the most part is India proper—that is, the Empire of Hindostan. Now, to describe India, even in the briefest manner, would require—as, indeed, it has obtained—many volumes. Our space will not admit of as many pages being devoted to it; but happily this is not necessary. In another work, to which this is a companion, full descriptions have been given of the native and other races, and in the English language the information in

\* "Notes on the Cocos or Keeling Islands," by H. O. Forbes (*Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, 1879, pp. 777—784, and 1880, p. 49); "A Naturalist's Wanderings in the Eastern Archipelago" (1885), pp. 11—47; Darwin: "Coral Reefs" (1874).

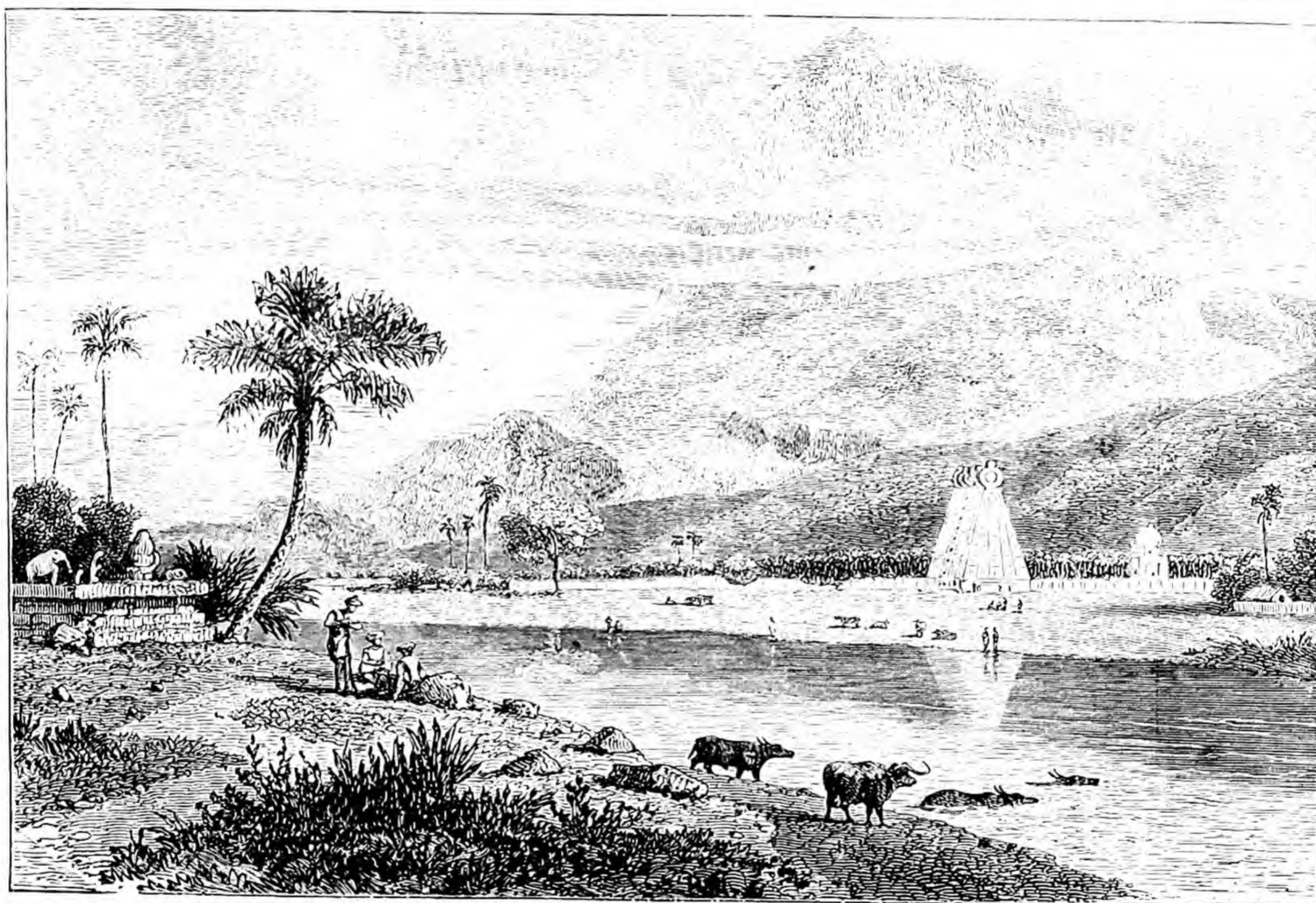


regard to the country itself is so abundant and easily accessible, that the outlines to which, in accordance with our plan, we are restricted can be easily filled up by any one desirous of fuller information.\*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INDIA: ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES.

IN familiar parlance we talk of India, or Hindostan,† as that huge triangle of Asia comprised in the area between the Indus on one side and the Ganges on the other, and



VIEW OF CAPE COMORIN, THE SOUTHERN POINT OF INDIA.

between Cape Comorin on the south and the Himalayas in the north. In reality, India includes within its comprehensive bounds a number of countries widely different as to

\* "The Peoples of the World," Vol. III., pp. 288—320, and Vol. IV., pp. 1—129.

† I must here, if possible, shield myself from the wrath of rival nomenclatorial schools by at once declaring for none of them. The Indian names will be spelt in the manner most familiar to the greatest number of my probable readers, without any regard to the fact of its being archaic or modern, right or wrong. I am afraid that, spelled after the new fashion, some of the old places would fail to be recognised.



their physical features, products, climates, races, religions, languages, and governments, and though the Hindoos form a considerable proportion of the people of these countries, it is almost needless to say that they are not the sole inhabitants of any large portion of a region as large as all of Europe, if Russia is excluded from the computation. Nor are the parts politically, historically, or socially one, though through the force of circumstances they are, with a few exceptions, units in the British Empire. "Wide differences of race and creed," writes Dr. Hunter, "are known to exist, but the recognition is dim and speculative rather than practically and substantially realised. Setting aside the Mussulmans and their faith, it is generally supposed that the inhabitants of India are, and for ages have been, Hindus; that the religion of India since the beginning of history has been the Hindu religion; and that from time immemorial Indian society has been artificially divided into four classes, known as the Hindu castes. Such opinions have led to a complete misunderstanding of the Indian people, a misunderstanding which warps our whole political dealings with India, and which stands as a barrier between our Eastern subjects and that new order of things, with its more active humanity and purer creed, of which England is the messenger and representative to the Asiatic world."\*

#### PLAINS AND TABLE-LAND.

From the twenty-fifth degree of latitude southward General Strachey justly characterises the Indian Peninsula as a great table-land, having its greatest elevation on the west, where some hills rise to 8,000 feet or more, though the ordinary heights are not over half of that, and the general level of the table-land lies between a maximum of 3,000 feet and a minimum of 1,000 feet. The great plain of Northern India, lying between the Ganges and Brahmapootra on the east and the delta of the Indus on the west, and between the table-land of the peninsula and the foot of the Himalayan slope of the Tibetan Plateau, rises at its highest point to about 1,000 feet, and if its prolongation up the valley of Assam is taken into account, is the richest, most populous, and most civilised portion of India. It stretches in an almost unbroken flat from one side of India to the other, and, to use General Strachey's words, "is composed of deposits so finely comminuted that it is no exaggeration to say that it is possible to go from the Bay of Bengal, up the Ganges, through the Punjab, and down the Indus again to the sea, over a distance of 2,000 miles and more, without finding a pebble, however small." India has, indeed, not unfittingly been called an "epitome of the whole earth," so varied is its surface, so widely different are the climates of its different portions. In the north are mountains the highest in the world, whose peaks are covered with perpetual snow, and through whose valleys creep great glaciers, compared with which those of the Alps are mere puny ice-streams. Further south are fertile plains, sweltering under a torrid sun, and close by arid wastes and jungles, unpenetrated save by wild beasts or the rudest savages—wrecks of the prevailing barbarism which overspread the country when the Aryan race, from which most of the European nations are sprung, poured through the mountain passes from High Asia, and gradually brought in a higher civilisation, just as

\* Hunter: "Annals of Rural Bengal" (1871), p. 97.

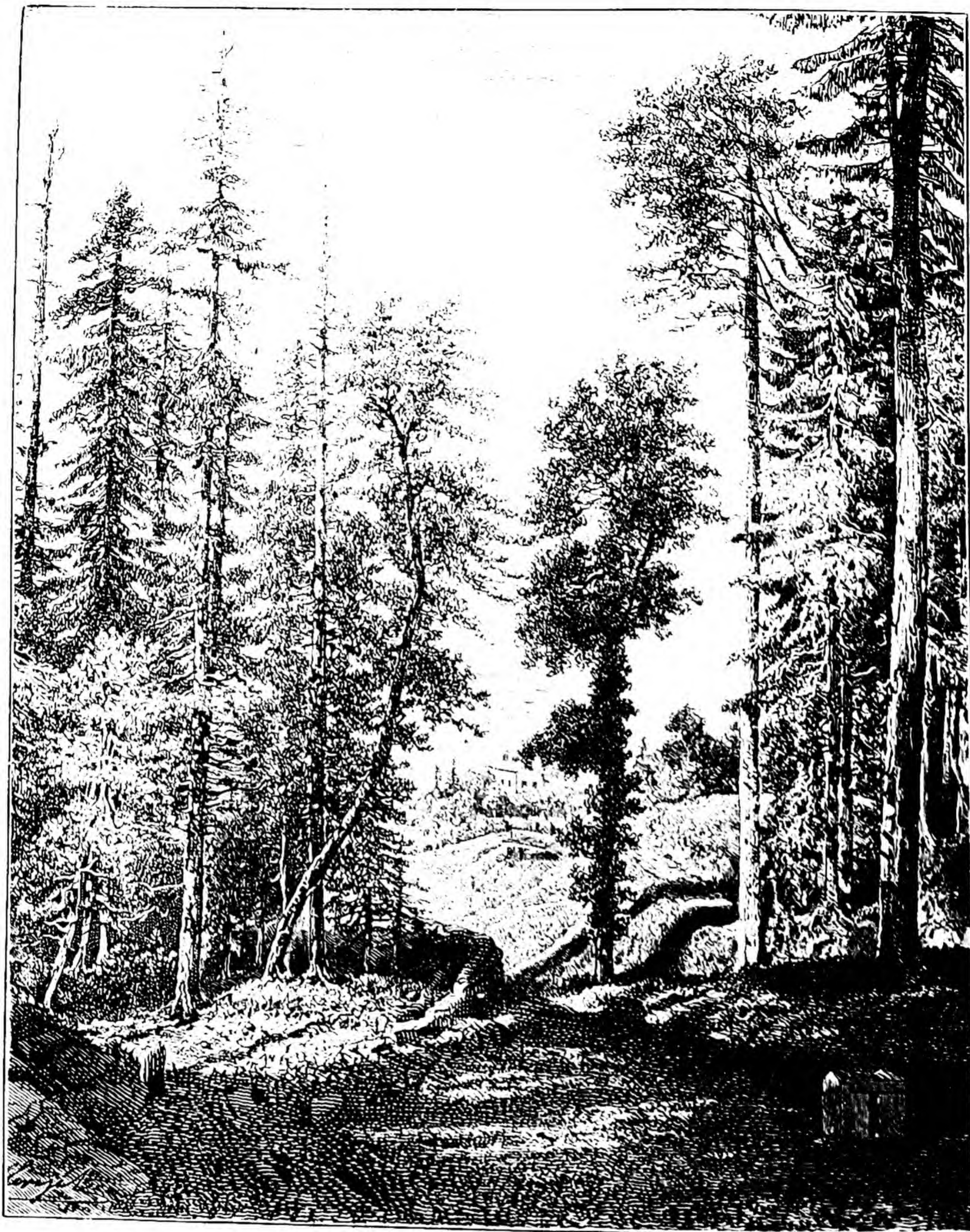


they, in their turn, were and are partially making way for a culture nobler still. Exclusive of the Malayan or Trans-Gangetic Peninsula, which we have already visited, Mr. Kurz, a well-known botanist, has divided India from a physical point of view into three main regions:—(1) The Himalaya, extending from Kashmir to Bhotan and Chittagong; (2) The Peninsula with Ceylon, stretching as far north as the table-land extends; and (3) The Great Plain between, the home of the Hindoos, or Hindostan proper.\* The Himalaya is in reality not a mountain range, as it appears on the map, but a mountain region, and, as Mr. Markham has pointed out, in his masterly description of its physical features, is composed of three great culminating chains, running more or less parallel to each other for their whole length, from the Gorge of the Indus to that of the Dihong. Between the inner and the outer range lies for the most part the lofty region of Great Tibet, already described (pp. 101–111), and most of the rivers of Northern India take their rise in the central chain, and run through its length. The Karakoram Range is the name given to the western section of the most northern and inner of the Himalayan chains. Its valleys are blocked by vast glaciers, and among its peaks is one 28,000 feet above the sea, while some of its passes are 18,000 and 19,000 feet in height (p. 180). The eastern section of the Northern Range forms the natural boundary of Great Tibet, and, like the western part, has lofty peaks, one being 25,000 feet high, while the Gangri “Knot” of the Tibetans—a name Mr. Trelawney Saunders has proposed for the whole range—is 22,000 feet above the sea. The Central Range is very little known, but the Southern Himalaya, with its stupendous peaks, has been more studied by travellers in this wild region. It averages ninety miles in breadth, the culminating points being from 10,000 feet to 29,000 feet above the sea level. In fact, the character of the Himalayan slope is a perpetual succession of vast ridges, with narrow intervening glens, and open valleys, such as that of Nepal, are very rare.† This Central Range is divided into three longitudinal zones, each varying in products and climate according to its distance above the sea level, the temperature diminishing  $3^{\circ}$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit for every thousand feet of ascent, while every movement towards the west or north-west “brings the traveller into a dryer climate, and takes him farther and farther away from the line of the rainy monsoon. In ascending the gorges, from the terai [or lowest zone] to the Alpine ridges, the traveller passes through three zones of vegetation. In the lower region he finds the *sal* and *sissu*, banyans and peepuls, bamboos and palms. The central slopes are clothed with oaks, chestnuts, magnolias, laurels, rhododendrons, cherry and pear trees, thorns, ashes, and elms; and the upper region is that of junipers, larches, yews, poplars, dwarf rhododendrons, hollies, birches, and willows.” The animals also vary in a similar manner, according to the zone of altitude; and altogether the great Himalayan mountain region—2,000 miles in length and from 100 to 500 miles in breadth—has exercised a remarkable influence, not on the climate, but on the peopling and civilisation of Asia. The highest elevations of the Himalayas are of course incapable of nourishing animal life, but in the lower valleys live hardy races of mountaineers who have from time immemorial maintained an independent existence,

\* Clarke: *Transactions of the Linnean Society*, 2nd Ser., Bot., Vol. I. (1880), p. 425.

† Hodgson: “Geography of the Himalaya,” p. 3, cited by Markham: “Tibet,” *Introduct.*, p. xxxiv.





VIEW IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS.

while the languid dwellers in the lower plains, enervated by heat and luxury, have again and again succumbed to the conqueror.

The sub-Himalayan countries consist of Kashmir, Gurwhal, Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim,



and Bhotan, all of which are hilly regions, with a cool climate and vegetation of the temperate zones. The *Terai*, or great Indian swamp, a belt five to twenty-five miles in breadth, separates these countries from the Plain of India (p. 178). This terai, though exceedingly fertile, is very malarious, at least from April to October, and at that season is abandoned even by wild beasts, while most men shun it as a permanent place of abode at all times of the year. The villagers in the vicinity speak of it with bated breath as "Mar"—*i.e.*, death—and the only people who dare permanent residence in it are the Taros, a squalid, feebly-formed, truthful race, whose existence is a standing physiological miracle. Great forest trees cover it, innumerable wild animals haunt it, and altogether the terai forms a marked barrier between the races of the sub-Himalayan countries and those inhabiting the plains. It is not only a dividing wall between the cool uplands and the hot lowlands of India, but is a narrow strip, the people on one side of which are shut off, owing to their difference of language, from those living on the other side.

The Plain of the Indus, Brahmapootra, and the Ganges, stretching right across India, we have already alluded to. It is not only one of the richest but one of the finest-watered regions in the world. Throughout this rich alluvial flat the Ganges and its endless tributaries ramify in a fertilising network, making the great Province of Bengal, which is included in it, the most populous portion of all India. Bahar, the Doab, Oude, Rohilcund, are all in the Plain of the Ganges; and taking into account its cities, towns, villages, and teeming agricultural population, the region cannot hold less than 100,000,000 people, or about one-fourth more than the whole inhabitants of the Russian Empire, and more than twice as many as are at present settled in the United States of America. Crossing the Aravulli Hills, we descend on the other side of India into the more circumscribed but still vast plain of the Indus, a mighty river which flows into the opposite ocean. In this region lies the Punjab: south of this province for nearly five hundred miles stretch parallel with the river the sandy deserts of the Indus, and in its lower course the river flows through the unhappy land of Scinde. In addition to the countries named, Cutch and Gujerat stretch over the Indus Plain to the Arabian Sea; while between the river and the Aravulli Mountains is the Thur Desert, an expanse 400 miles long and 100 broad, covered with sandhills, among which crops of grain can only be grown in a very few spots in the vicinity of the rivers or after the rains. In the Hindoo records it is described as the "Valley of Death." Men cannot cross it on foot, and even the horse and camel often succumb before they can pass its dreary wastes of sand, which, like the moist terai on the north, has ever acted as a dividing line between the races on each side of it.

#### THE GHATS AND BACKWATERS.

The table-land of India comprises Malwa and Rajpootana, the home of a fine race, who live in an atmosphere 2,000 feet above the sea, north of the Vindhya Mountains, and the Deccan, or peninsular portion of Hindostan, south of that range. This vast plateau is enclosed on all sides by lofty mountains, between which and the sea are low strips of level land, from which the mountains rise abruptly by a succession of great terraces, or ghats, to the table-land beyond. These "Ghats," meaning literally gates or



passes, thus run parallel with the east and west coasts of India, and hence are known as the Eastern and Western. On the land side they slope gradually to the table-land of the Deccan, but seaward they show perpendicular precipices, at a distance varying from six to seventy miles from the sea, forty or fifty miles, however, being the usual distance. The interval is the maritime strip mentioned. To this region the south-west monsoon brings fearful floods of rain, and aids in forming the interesting "backwaters" about which so much has been written at different times. In the State of Cochin we see many of these curious lagoons. The flat country between the Ghauts and the sea is elevated but slightly, if at all, above the tide, and may be said to be formed by the alluvial soil brought down by the torrents from the wearing away of the great precipitous buttresses beyond. Hence the brooks which plunge over the Western Ghauts are in their upper course fierce torrents, which carry everything before them, and in their lower sluggish, almost imperceptibly moving estuaries, black and unsightly in appearance, and more or less brackish in taste. These estuaries are frequently breasted by a lighter strip of ground, and by their union often form an inland lagoon, in one case—as in Cochin—120 miles long, and varying in breadth from a few yards to more than 100 miles, only communicating with the sea at a few places where the streams which form them flow into the ocean. The navigable value of these backwaters is great. The Malabar coast is thus furnished by nature with a highway which traverses its whole length, from Trivandrum to the railroad at Ponany, except at one point, the Warkallay Barrier, which, if cut through, would complete the inland navigation of this part of India.\* The contrast between the rush of the bright mountain stream while its upper waters dash over the Ghauts, and the dark, sullen character of its final course to the sea, is very marked. A correspondent thus graphically describes the scene. Alluding to the Sarda, he tells us that in its debouchure at Burrumdeo, down to Moondia Ghaut, it is a bright, "sparkling, merry mountain stream, often broken into two or three channels. It flows through grassy glades and sissu forests, swells here over deep sunken rocks, and then forms a fall below a shoal of glittering gravel, which makes the fisherman's eye glisten as it recalls to memory happy days on the Spey or Findhorn. But here and there a backwater, still as death, runs back far into a ghastly swamp, where the water is never rippled, save by the silent plunge of the weird snake-bird or the stealthy waddle of a gorged alligator. Huge ungainly fish and bloated carrion-turtle glide far below the surface, round the skeleton roots of bleached and barkless trees—a phantom forest, lichen-shrouded. On the stark framework of bone-like branches sits motionless the gaping lock-jawed cormorant, with half-spread, stiffened wings, a bony parody of taxidermy, or the foul vulture, its livid neck smothered in fluffy feathers, like some shapeless Caffre kaross, the only sign of life a dull, deceitful eye. On a dead willow, stretching far over the inky pool, lies twined a python, limp and semi-rotten. The head is gone; the muscles of the neck, blanched and torn into strings, are hanging a few inches above the water, jagged by resistance to the tug of the turtle teeth. Here and there scales have separated, and the glairy, sodden skin hangs flabby and ruptured. Can you believe that you are within ear-shot of a babbling mountain torrent, on whose

\* Markham: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXXVI. (1866), p. 195.



floods the mightiest tree-trunks are but straws—a torrent irresistible, ever living, ever fitful?”

#### THE RIVER SYSTEM.

Some of the mightiest rivers in the world, and in Asia certainly the most interesting, are in India. The Ganges, the Brahmapootra, and the Indus drain the northern part of the empire. They rise in the Tibetan range; and, curiously enough, almost the whole of the waters of the high plateau of Tibet flow through British India between 95th and 75th meridians, the only part of the drainage thrown off to the north being, as General Strachey notes, that of the northern mountain slope. The Indus rises in a Himalayan peak 18,000 feet above the sea, and before it falls into the Arabian Sea, through a delta measuring 75 miles by 130, it drains more than 400,000 square miles of country, or an area quadruple that of Great Britain and Ireland. The Cabul, the Attock, the accumulated waters of the Punjab, in the form of the Punjnad and a hundred minor rivers, combine to swell the great flood of the Indus; but below its confluence with the Punjnad, so narrow is the valley through which it runs that its volume decreases rather than swells, while the circumscribed character of its basin prevents it receiving many affluents. Add to these circumstances the fact that the river here divides into a number of branches, some of which never return to the main current, but branch off, and, under different names, strike out new courses for themselves. Others, again, return much shrunken in dimensions, so that the decrease of the size of the waters of the Indus can easily be accounted for, though the observer does not at first sight notice this, owing to the current now becoming sluggish, and the tides running up to augment its bulk.

Yet, in spite of its size and length, the Indus is not of great value to commerce. Its channels through the delta are not all navigable, even at the highest state of the water, for any save the smallest vessels; and its importance has been lessened since railways have permeated the country through which it flows. Kurrachee is the terminus of these lines, while Hyderabad, Sukkur, Shikarpore, Mooltan, and other cities are united in their network, and the railway will soon cross the Indus itself by the bridge which it is proposed to throw over it from Sukkur on the right bank to Roree on the left, the resting-place being Bukkur, a rocky island between them. A still nobler river is the sacred Ganges, which, together with its tributaries, drains about 500,000 square miles from the ice-cave where it rises, 10,300 feet above the sea, in the Gurwhal State, to where it falls, 1,500 miles away, through many mouths, into the Bay of Bengal. At Allahabad the Jumna joins it, and in its course through the north-western provinces the Gumti and Gogra; and soon after passing the holy city of Benares into Bahar the Sone unites with it; and after Patna is left behind, the Gandak, from Nepal, adds its volume to the great river of India. The Kusi is the next important tributary, and by the time the ruined city of Gaur is reached the current has expanded into a mighty volume, and approached within 240 miles of the sea in a straight line, though by the tortuous windings of the current the distance is much greater. It, however, soon loses its individuality,



and branches out into the various mouths which, under different names, cut up the delta into a number of low, marshy, ever increasing or decreasing islands. The main channel is the Podda, and after being reinforced by the Jabuna, or chief stream of the Brahmapootra, and numerous other additions from the hill country on the east, it forms the broad estuary of Megna, which ends in the Bay of Bengal, near Noakhally.



BOATS AND BOATMEN OF THE GANGES.

But this is only one of many such estuaries. The Hooghly, on which Calcutta is built, is one of these, and between it and the Megna is the delta proper, which in its upper portion is rich and thickly inhabited, but on its southern borders by the sea is little better than a series of great swamps, seeped through by innumerable channels of the river. The sunder-tree is the chief product of this tract, which is hence known as the Sunderbunds. The Ganges is well suited for navigation, but with the exception of the busy traffic along the various channels below Calcutta, steam navigation on the river has ceased to be important, the great cities by its waters being now all connected by rail. Calcutta,



Monghyr, Patna, Benares, Allahabad, are populous towns on its banks below its union with the Jumna, while Agra and Delhi are among the familiar names of places on its



VIEW OF THE CITY OF BENARES.

upper waters. But the river itself, quite as much as the progress of railways, has determined the fate of the cities which from time to time have grown up in its vicinity. At uncertain intervals great changes take place in the bed of the stream, which alter the whole condition of the neighbouring country. Islands are thrown up in places where,



a few weeks before, the river rolled, and, owing to the rapid growth of vegetation in these countries, are speedily covered with bush, which affords a shelter to alligators and the other wild animals of the region bordering the sacred river. By-and-by the silt brought down shoals up the space between the islands and the bank, until the current, deflected by the newly-formed peninsula abutting into it, sweeps against the opposite shore, washing into its flood a cultivated farm, a mile of forest, or a village of mud huts, or it may be cutting out for itself a new channel far away from the old one. So frequent and sudden are these changes in Lower Bengal that it is considered dangerous to erect any edifice of a large or permanent character within the range of the river's action. Rajmahal, which was formerly on its banks, is now seven miles in the back country, and the existence of ruined cities, long ago deserted of their commerce and population, attests the vagaries of the Ganges in former times. But apart from its character as a great highway for millions of people whose life will not for a time to come be seriously influenced by steamboats or railways, the Ganges is a sacred river. Deo Prayag, the point at which the united currents of the Jahnavi and Alaknanda take the name of the Ganges, has for ages been a favourite place of pilgrimage, though Gangotri, near which the river takes its source, has up to this day maintained its popularity with the more devout Hindoos. Indeed, the points of juncture of the tributaries with the main river have all pretensions to sanctity. But even the debouchures of the Gumti and Gogra are of sanctity very inferior to the tongue of land at Allahabad where the Jumna flows into the Ganges, and to which every year thousands of the pious flock in poverty and misery, happy if, after praying and washing in the sacred water, they can return to their distant village conscious that they have taken a fresh start in holiness. Finally, not to enumerate the numerous other places of more or less note, Benares (p. 185) is everywhere celebrated as *the* holy city of the Ganges valley. Its fame in Warren Hastings' time has been sketched in one of Macaulay's most brilliant passages. "It was commonly believed," writes the famous historian, "that half a million of human beings were crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines and minarets, and balconies and carved oriels, to which the sacred apes clung by hundreds. The traveller could scarcely make his way through the press of holy mendicants and not less holy bulls. The broad and stately flights of steps which descended from these swarming haunts to the bathing places along the Ganges were worn every day by the footsteps of an innumerable multitude of worshippers. The schools and temples drew crowds of pious Hindoos from every province where the Brahminical faith was known. Hundreds of devotees came hither every month to die: for it was believed that a peculiarly happy fate awaited the man who should pass from the sacred city into the sacred river. Nor was superstition the only motive which allured strangers to that great metropolis. Commerce had as many pilgrims as religion. All along the shore of the venerable stream lay great fleets of vessels laden with rich merchandise. From the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the halls of St. James and of Versailles; and in the bazaars the muslins of Bengal and the satins of Oude were mingled with the jewels of Goleonda and the shawls of Cashmere." The Benares of those days still partially exists. It is still



the holy city, but its Old World aspects are altered in so far that railways now run into it, and amid the crowd of pilgrims who have adopted that modern mode of speeding on an Old World errand, jostle at the station the "pugareed" officials of the dominant race, and the noisy tourists who have come to "do" the sacred city, its monkeys, its bulls, its devotees, and its ghauts.\* India, however, does not change much. The traveller who in the last cold season glided down the Ganges might, for all the change he sees in the fundamental habits of the people, have been performing his journey quite three centuries ago (p. 184). To read the narrative of Ralph Fitch, one of the early adventurers in India, is to read the description of the river to-day. In 1585 he sailed down the Ganges in a boat, which was one of a fleet of 123 vessels laden with salt, opium, indigo, lead, carpets, and other commodities. The Brahmins then, as now, were performing their mysterious rites. The Hindoo women were bathing, and the men saluting each other with cries of "Rama." At Allahabad he saw naked mendicants. In those days they were quite common, though—and this is one of the few changes which time has wrought—they have almost disappeared from India in modern times. At Benares he gazed on the same bewildering world of temples and idols, thronged with endless crowds of worshippers, that meet the eye at the present time. But Lower Bengal has vastly improved since the day when the pioneer of the English merchants wandered through Hindostan; where now spread indigo, cotton, and opium fields was then a wide region "so beset with thieves" that, to use General Fytche's words, "the jungle was safer than the highways."

The Brahmapootra is a less important, though larger, river. It does not extend far, for from its source in the Tibetan plateau to the place where it flows into the Bay of Bengal it is about 1,800 miles long. But the last part of its course constitutes in reality an estuary studded with islands, and formed by the union of the Ganges and Megna with it, while its upper waters are still imperfectly known, and even some of its main tributaries have been only partially explored. In its current are numerous islands. Some of these, like Majuli, which contains over 280,000 acres, are well cultivated and inhabited, and on its banks, both in Assam and in India proper, are many towns and populous villages, though it is navigable only as far as Dibrugarh, and even there during the dry season only by steamers of light draught (Hunter). The "bore," which has given the river a certain notoriety in text-books of physical geography, is caused by the upward rush of the tide suddenly flowing through the passages between the islands which stud the estuary formed by the union of the Brahmapootra, Ganges, and Megna into the great estuary mentioned. It is thus seen that India is cut up by three great rivers and their tributaries. But there is no extensive region of the country which has not the benefit of water communication of a more or less important character, the

\* Ghauts—not to be confounded with the cliffs of the same name (p. 181)—are buildings erected along the banks of the Indian rivers for the convenience of bathers. On the flights of steps which lead down from the kiosks to the water the Hindoo passes some of the happiest hours of his life. Here, away from the narrow, unwholesome streets, he can breathe the fresh air of the river, and sit in contemplative attitude, intent on devout things, gossip with the idle, or perhaps transact some business with these not unwilling to combine pleasure with profit.



number of rivers, greater and smaller, which form a network throughout it being much too numerous to describe, or even to name.

#### THE HILL COUNTRY.

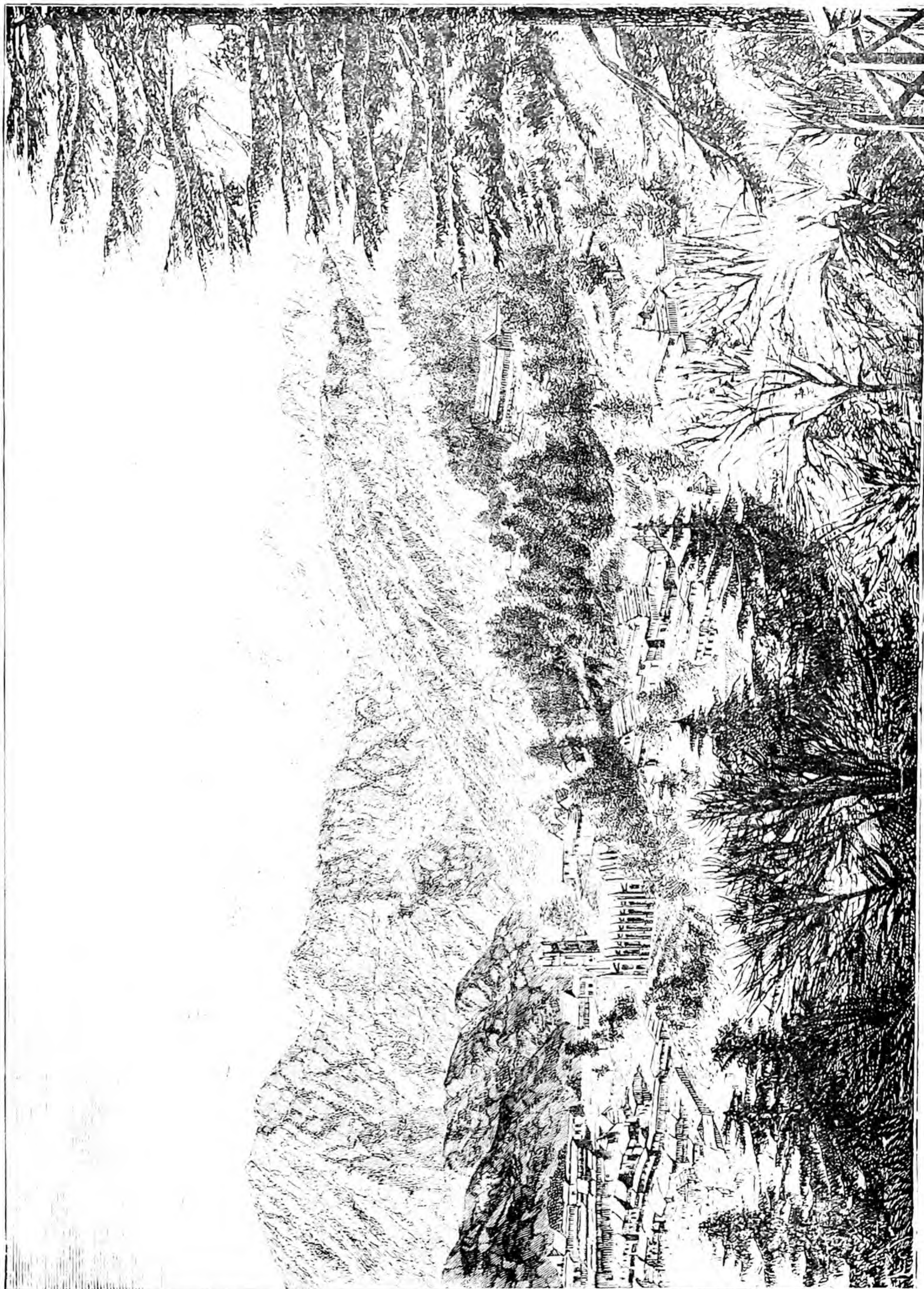
In like manner, though the Himalayas are the great mountain partition between the plains of Central Asia and India, they do not constitute the only upland range of the latter country. In Southern India there are the Neilgherries, or Blue Mountains, which rise isolated in the midst of the surrounding plain to the height of over 7,400 feet, and extend over an area of 600 square miles. They form the greater sanatorium for the neighbouring region. Ootacamund is, indeed, to Madras what Simla is to Calcutta, and Mahabaleshwar to Bombay—the breathing-place where the languid frames of the dwellers in the low, moist plains can get recruited for the labours of life. It is wet, but cooler even than its Himalayan rivals. The Palnai Hills, still further south, form another retreat of the same nature, while the Shevarai Hills, which are part of the Eastern Ghauts, afford a cool holiday home for those who do not care or are unfit to undertake the journey to the Neilgherries. The Sewalik range—famous for its fossil remains—rises to the height of 3,000 feet, the Kala, or Salt Mountains, to the height of 2,500 feet, the Aravulli, forming the division between the basins of the Indus and the Ganges, culminate in Mount Abu, 5,000 feet high, the Kattywar Hills, with peninsula of the same name, are lower, the Bundelcunds lower still, but the Rajmahals rise in places as high as 7,000 feet. The Vindhya Mountains, which cross India and separate its southern or peninsular portion from Hindostan proper, nowhere exceed 6,000 feet, but the Suliman Mountains rival the Himalayas, of which they may indeed be considered a part, in the grandeur of their peaks. The Satpura range is a spur of the Vindhya, while the Western Ghauts, on which is situated the Mahabaleshwar Sanatorium, are the counterpart of the eastern ones on the opposite coast, which we have already described (p. 182).

#### CLIMATE.

This, of course, varies greatly in different parts of a region so immense. In the extreme north the difference between summer and winter does not exceed  $40^{\circ}$ , but as the traveller proceeds south he finds the difference less and less, until it is about  $15^{\circ}$  at Calcutta, and only  $10^{\circ}$  or  $20^{\circ}$  at Bombay and Madras. But these figures very imperfectly explain the character of the climate of India, as it is dependent on different circumstances than mere heat or cold. In all parts of the country there are three more or less pronounced seasons—the hot, the rainy, and the cold.

These seasons, however, vary in different parts of the country. As a rule, the first usually lasts from the middle of March to the middle of June, but the *heats* in the moist plains of Bengal, where for weeks life is passed in a vapour bath, and the same season in North-Western India and the Punjaub, where the hot dry winds raise the temperature to  $120^{\circ}$  in the shade, are the same, but with a world of difference. This season in the low lands of the interior is unhealthy, but on the coast the cool breezes temper it, while on the higher hill-stations existence is, during the “heats,” most endurable.





VIEW OF SIMLA.



The *rains*—an era in the Indian social calendar—usually begin in the middle of June, and though the amount of rainfall varies, continue with little intermission till the end of September. At this period of the year, also, the melting snow on the high mountains causes the rivers to fill, so that inundations are frequent in certain parts of the country. The *cold season* falls in November, December, and January. In the north-west provinces and the Punjaub, water is, during these months, often frozen in the shallow pools during the night, and there is hoar-frost in the morning. The residents feel the invigorating cold until the sun warms the air, and even welcome the unwonted sight of a fire. In Lower Bengal and Southern India the cold season is not only pleasant, but owing to the buoyancy of the air under a cloudless sky, life is “something more than enjoyable.” At the hill-stations the cold is really intense, and the snow deep and of long duration. It thus appears that the old idea about the universally bad climate of India is erroneous. The plains are certainly during a portion of the year unhealthy, and European children cannot well be reared there. But the hills and valleys of the Himalayas and other ranges are cool and salubrious, and suit the European much better than some of the hotter parts of Australia. Here the offspring of pure European parents do not degenerate, while East Indians, or Eurasians, a mixed race, rapidly increasing in India, rather improve than otherwise in these bracing upland regions.\* There seems, therefore, no reason why European colonies, of soldiers and civilians whose term of service has expired, should not be established in these valleys or in the lovely Vale of Kashmir. Such settlements would be infinitely to the benefit of the country and of the natives, and would secure our hold on India as really a British colony, instead of it being, as under the present system it must continue to be, a great camp of soldiers, officials, and adventurers, who are in haste to make in a few years the fortune which will enable them to spend the rest of their life thousands of miles away from the people among whom or by whose industry and custom it was earned.

#### MINERAL WEALTH.

We are so accustomed to associate India with her vegetable riches that we forget that within her bounds she possesses wealth of coal and ores which, did the soil not yield an ounce of any other product, would give her a high place among poor countries with the potentiality of riches. Many years ago, an eminent geologist, fond of prophesying even when he “didn’t know,” declared that he would undertake to eat every bit of coal which could be found in India. If so, his appetite is Gargantuan, otherwise his digestion must long ago have been seriously disordered, since extensive coal-fields have been discovered between the Ganges and Godavery, which differ little geologically from the carboniferous beds of England. Coal has been worked for over twenty years, and is used on most of the Indian railways. The precious stones of India, in spite of the diamonds and the gems of Golconda being now chiefly historical, are still a source of wealth to the seeker in the crevices of the rocks or among the gravels of the river beds (p. 192). Opals, amethysts, garnets, cornelians, and other gems are not unfrequently found. Iron exists in many places, particularly in the Madras Presidency, while silver, galena, and

\* Andrews: “India and Her Neighbours” (1878), pp. 8-10.



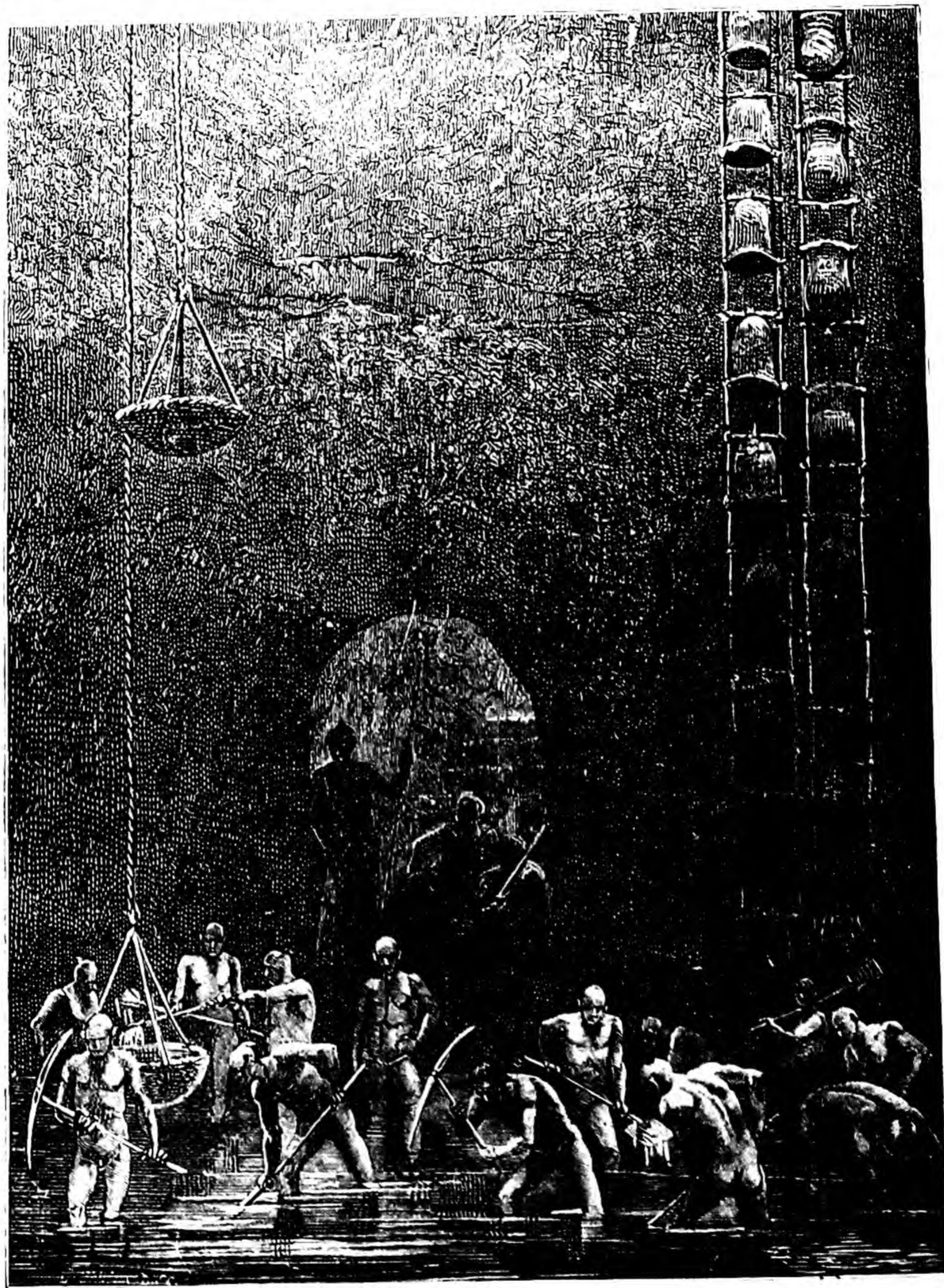
other ores are either found in sufficient abundance to be worked, or afford such "indication" as to lend hopes of great things in the future. Gold is, however, the metal which has of late years attracted most attention in India. In greater or less quantities it has been washed from time immemorial out of the sand and gravel of many of the rivers. But it is only comparatively recently that the quartz reefs which form the original source of the drift gold in the streams have been detected. The result has been something very like a panic, and only in March, 1880, the rush for an allotment of shares in one of the companies newly formed in London must have reminded those who witnessed it of the struggle round the office door during the days of the South Sea Bubble or of Law's Mississippi Scheme. The principal district is in the Wynaad country, and has not unnaturally been the subject of much inflated talk by those interested in exaggerating the importance of the mines. Mr. Brough Smyth, who examined them for the Government of India, may, however, be accepted as a trustworthy witness. His report is that the gold-bearing rocks are found at a great many localities, scattered over 500 square miles of country. In former times this gold was worked at many places by the natives, who sluiced the golden earth and gravel over extensive areas, but of recent years the native workings have been on a very small and unremunerative scale. Though at intervals from 1832 to 1845 attempts were made to work the reefs, the speculation proved unprofitable, most probably owing to unsuitable appliances and improper supervision; for the 137 assays which he gives prove the rock to be of a "paying" description. If we omit the altogether exceptional sample from "Wright's level," which gave  $204\frac{1}{2}$  oz. per ton, and the "picked specimens" from the same workings, which gave  $25\frac{1}{2}$  oz. per ton, we get 88 samples yielding an average of 1 oz. 8 dwts. 22 grs. of gold per ton.

Mr. Smyth says that gold is almost universally distributed throughout the soils and quartz veins of the Wynaad. It occurs also in the sands and soils both on the east, west, north, and south. In South-east Wynaad, on washing a few dishes of the surface-soil anywhere, specks of very fine gold will be found. In the vicinity of the reefs rather heavy gold is often got by sluicing; and if a suitable spot be selected, the native miners will obtain, even by their imperfect methods, sufficient gold to remunerate them for their labour. The character of the rocks, the nature of the climate, and the formation of the country have all contributed to prevent the accumulation of drifts such as are found in North-west America and Australia. There are here no "gullies" having in their beds shallow deposits with a well-defined auriferous stratum, no "deep leads" covered and protected by layers of volcanic rock; there are only, as a rule, in the district now under consideration, "surfacing" and "quartz-mining." On the Seeputtee river there is an accumulation of well-rounded boulders of quartz and gneissoid rock imbedded in hard clay and sandy soil, which may be regarded almost as a "cement." It is no more than the old bed of the river, which, owing to the "cutting back" action of the water, has lowered its level and left this drift on its banks. It is probable that, as in other similar cases, the "cement" will be found in patches on both sides of the river, in places which were formerly bends of the old stream. The bed-rock on which the gravel, clay, and boulders lie is at no great height above the level of the existing water-course; and the part of the drift which has been worked is about thirty feet in thickness. This drift, and those which are to be

AMAR SINGH  
Acc. No.



found in the beds of the swamps, may be said to represent the alluvial deposits of the Wynaad. Some of these are probably rich in gold, but it is only under favourable conditions that they could remunerate the miner. It would be extremely difficult and costly,



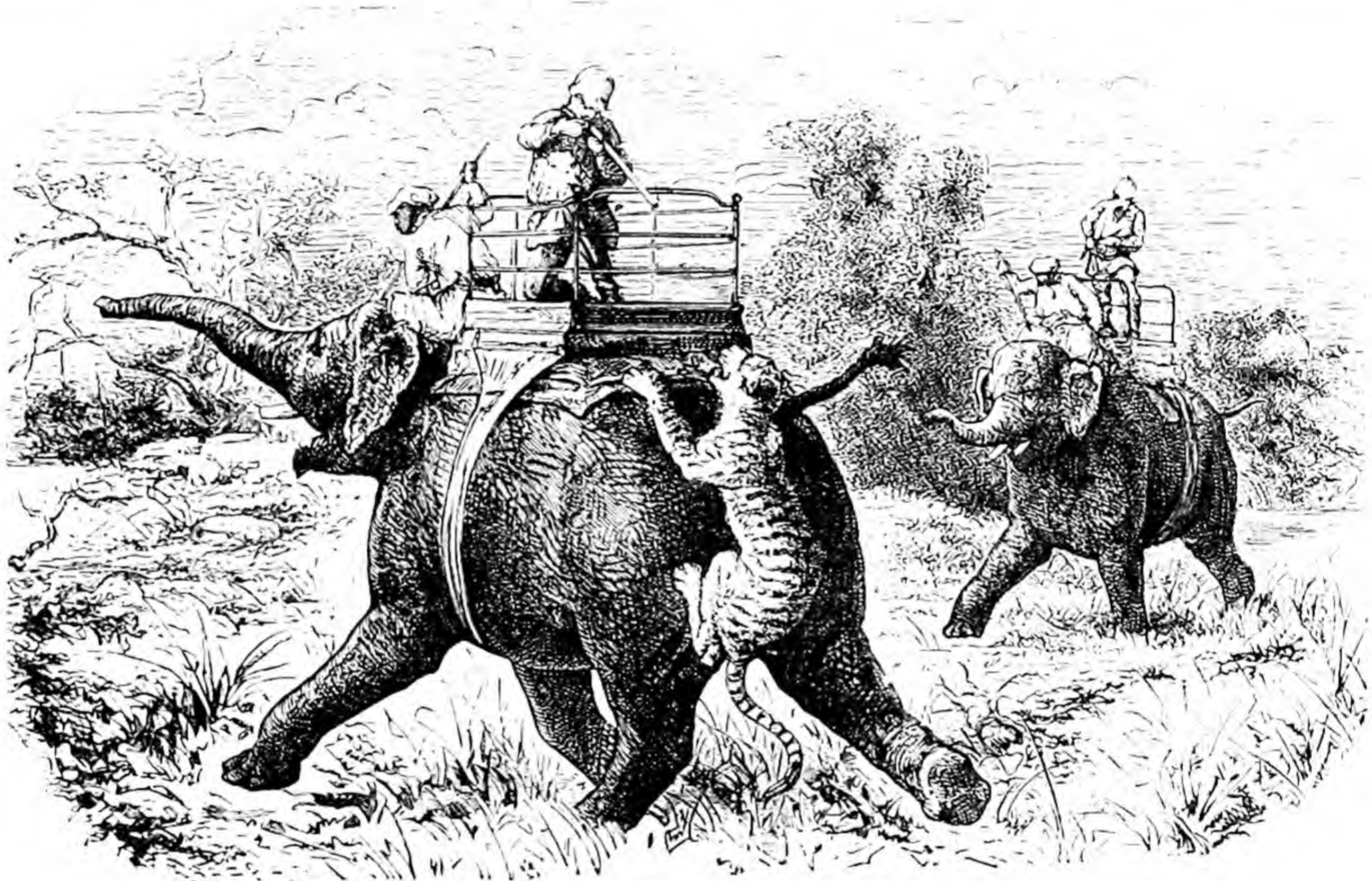
SCENE IN THE DIAMOND MINES OF FUNNAH.

and in many cases almost impracticable, to drain the swamps by artificial channels, and the expense of pumping the water from a shaft would be very great. Still, if the lowest stratum should prove to be highly auriferous, it might be found remunerative to resort even to pumping, care being taken to carry off the surface water from the swamps by



constructing races. Below the Wynaad plateau and bordering on the Tertiaries there are in the beds of the streams rather deep deposits of drift. At Karambaut the water-worn gravels and rounded blocks of country rock and quartz are of considerable thickness. Below Eddacurra the bed-rock is covered with very recent deposits and Tertiary strata (laterite). It is not known whether the stratum immediately overlying the bed-rock is generally auriferous; but wherever the latter is intersected by quartz veins more or less gold will be found in the disintegrated rocks.

In concluding his report, Mr. Brough Smyth adds:—"Gold has been found on the south near Eddacurra, and on the north near Nellacottah, on the west near Vyteri, and on the east as far as Bolingbroke—that is to say, over an area of more than 500



TIGER HUNTING WITH ELEPHANTS IN INDIA.

square miles. The reefs are very numerous, and they are more than of the average thickness of those found in other countries. They are of great longitudinal extent, some being traceable by their outcrops for several miles. They are strong and persistent, and highly auriferous at an elevation of less than 500 feet above the sea, and they can be traced thence upwards to a height of nearly 8,000 feet; near them, gold can be washed out of almost every dish of earth that is dug. The proportion of gold in some of the soils and reefs in the neighbourhood of Devála is large; and the country presenting the greatest facilities for prosecuting mining operations at the smallest cost, it must be apparent to all who have given attention to this question that, sooner or later, gold-mining will be established as an important industry in Southern India. The retardation of this event will be caused, not by the meagreness of the resources—they are large—but probably by the mistaken notion that wherever there is gold all the care, all the forethought that would be deemed requisite in other pursuits, may be disregarded in conducting mining operations."



India, it cannot be too frequently dinned into unwilling ears, is not a rich country. It has the materials which might produce great riches, but its teeming millions are poor, and a vast portion of the country is quite as undeveloped as some of our newest colonies. Energy is not a marked characteristic of any great portion of the people. Gold-mining, which would afford a chance of earning money quickly, would no doubt attract many. But as the future prospects of our Indian Empire must depend on some more stable foundation than the ephemeral lottery of a gold-mine, it is questionable whether the recent discoveries will be for good or evil to India. That they will prove harmless is, perhaps, hoping for the best.

#### ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE.

The climate of India not being uniform, its fauna and flora are equally varied. The dry desert tracts from Persia to Sindh are characterised by life of one general type, while the regions of periodical rains and high temperatures have in like manner certain features in common. But take India as a whole, its fauna is, if not peculiar, at least characteristic. Monkeys of many genera and species—some peculiar to the country—inhabit the jungles, and even the trees in close vicinity to the villages, while both insect and fruit-eating bats are found in great numbers, and are of types not known elsewhere. The tiger has wandered into other regions of Asia, but India may be considered its true home. Civets, ichneumons, the binturong, two bears, many squirrels, porcupines, the Indian elephant, four species of rhinoceros, one tapir, several of the swine family, several genera of antelope, several of the genus *Bos*, numerous deer and chevrotains, and the scaly ant-eater may be mentioned among its better known mammalia. The birds of India are numerous and varied, nearly every order, except that of the ostrich, being represented, while there are several genera and even one family—that of the *Eurylaimide*—confined to the Peninsula.\* The sparrow has followed our countrymen into the Himalayas, but song birds are exceedingly scarce. The rivers swarm with fish,† the jungle—as the number of people killed by them unhappily testifies—with reptiles; while one of the least pleasant sights of Indian travel are the lazy, gorged alligators, which bask like huge lizards on the sands and banks of every river. The flora is, equally with the fauna, varied by the prevalence or absence of rains. The hotter and wetter parts of tropical India, we have already seen, are distinguished by the same type of animals and plants as the Malay Peninsula (Vol. IV., p. 255) and islands adjoining; but as we go westward from the lower ranges of the Himalayas, and the rainfall diminishes and the cold increases, the marked character of the flora ceases. The plants of the Upper Himalayas are very uniform throughout great tracts, and approximate to, and in a few cases are identical with, the European Alpine species. The plateau of Tibet is characterised by an assemblage of Siberian plants and by the presence of marine plants, especially in the vicinity of the salt lakes, at elevations of 14,000 to 15,000 feet above the level of the sea. In the hot and dry regions of the south-west plants of Africa, Beloochistan, and Sindh are found; and as these sometimes

\* Jerdon: "Birds of India" (1870).

† Day: "Fishes of India" (1875-78).



extend into the hotter parts of the country, General Strachey, from whom we take these facts about the Indian flora, notes that not a few common Egyptian plants are met with in the Indian Peninsula. Including the Malay Peninsula and islands, Sir Joseph Hooker has estimated the number of species indigenous to the region under description at from 12,000 to 15,000. In this assemblage there is a great preponderance of tropical forms, and illustrations of almost every family of plants. The dense forest which characterises the Malay Peninsula extends along the mountains of Eastern India to the Himalayas, and rises to elevations varying from 3,000 or 4,000 feet on the west, to 6,000 or 7,000 feet on the east. Northern India is distinguished by the presence of tree-ferns, which require less moisture and are better able to resist the high temperature and excessive drought of the hot months. In Southern India a connection has been noticed between the plants of the Peninsula and those of Ceylon and Eastern tropical Africa. More especially is this observed in the upland species, many of the plants of Abyssinia being the same as those parts of India. "This connection," writes General Strachey, "is further established by the absence from both areas of oaks, conifers, and cycads, which, as regards the first two families, is a remarkable feature of the flora of the Peninsula and Ceylon, as the mountains rise to elevations in which both are abundant to the north and east. With these facts it has to be noticed that many of the principal forms of the Eastern flora are absent or comparatively rare in the Peninsula and Ceylon.

"The general physiognomy of the Indian flora is mainly determined by the conditions of humidity of climate. The impenetrable shady forests of the Malay Peninsula and Eastern Bengal, of the west coast of the Indian Peninsula, and of Ceylon, offer a strong contrast with the more loosely-timbered districts of the dryer regions of Central India and the North-western Himalaya. There are no plains covered with forest, as in tropical America, the low lands of India being highly cultivated and adorned with planted wood, or where cut off from rain, nearly complete desert. The higher mountains rise abruptly from the plains. On their slopes, clothed almost exclusively with the more tropical forms, a vegetation of a warm character, chiefly evergreen, soon begins to prevail, comprising *Magnoliaceæ*, *Ternstroemiaceæ*, sub-tropical *Rosaceæ*, rhododendron, oak, *Ilex*, *Symplocos* *Laurineæ*, *Pinus longifolia*, with mountain forms of truly tropical orders, palms, *Pandanus*, *Musa*, *Vitis*, *Vernonia*, and many others. On the east the vegetation of the Himalaya is most abundant and varied. The forest extends, with great luxuriance, to an elevation of 12,000 feet, above which the sub-Alpine regions may be said to begin, in which the rhododendron scrub often covers the ground up to 13,000 or 14,000 feet. Only one pine is found below 3,000 feet, above which several of the *conifereæ* occur. Plantains, tree-ferns, bamboos, several *Calami* and other palms, and *Pandanus* are abundant at lower levels. Between 4,000 and 8,000 feet epiphytal orchids are frequent, and even reach to 10,000 feet. Vegetation ascends to the dryer and less snowy mountain slopes of Tibet to above 18,000 feet. On the west, with the dryer climate, the forest is less luxuriant and dense, and the hill-sides and the valleys better cultivated. From 8,000 to 12,000 feet a thick forest of deciduous trees is almost universal, above which a sub-Alpine region is reached, and vegetation, as on the east, continues up to 18,000 feet or more. The more tropical ferns of the East, such as the tree-ferns, do not reach west of



Nepaul. The cedar, or Deodar, is hardly indigenous east of the sources of the Ganges, and at about the same point the forms of the West begin to be more abundant, increasing in number as we advance towards Afghanistan." In India various millets, pulses, peas, beans, wheat, rice, barley, and maize are cultivated, in addition to mustard and rape, ginger, turmeric, pepper, capsicum, various members of the gourd order, tobacco, poppies, *Sesamum* (Gingelly oil plant), *Crotalaria* (Sunn hemp), cotton, *Cannabis* (hemp proper), indigo, sugar, coffee, tea, oranges, lemons of many varieties, pomegranates, mangoes, figs, peaches, vines, and plantains. The palms supply cocoa-nuts, jaggery or coarse sugar, and "toddy," and the forests abound in fine trees, though, owing to the want of the durability in the wood, the number of timber-yielding species is comparatively few. Teak is the best (p. 116), the sal (*Shorea robusta*) ranks next, and among others may be mentioned the babool (*Acacia*), toon (*Cedrela*), and sissoo (*Dalbergia*). The deodar, simply a slightly altered form of the cedar of Lebanon, is the only Himalaya timber in ordinary use, but the sandal-wood and many forms of bamboo add their quota to the arboreal products of Southern India. Among the introduced trees may be mentioned the *Cinchona*, or Peruvian bark, which, owing to the exertions of Mr. Clements Markham, has been planted on the hills of India, and promises to not only render the world independent of the rapidly diminishing supplies of this febrifuge obtained from South America, but to increase the quantity available, and thus to cheapen a drug indispensable in many climates. The American mahogany has also been planted, and, General Strachey considers, will in time form an article of commerce, as it grows to a large size in the congenial air of Hindostan. The richness of the Indian soil is markedly seen in some of the more cultivated valleys of the Himalaya, such as that of Kangra, which is a fair specimen of the many fertile regions in the Upper Himalaya. Temperate and tropical products grow side by side—roses and bamboos, violets, tulips, and plantains, pines, and apples. In Kanawur the vine, bearing excellent grapes, grows wild in the hedges, and pasture-lands are not wanting. Indeed, though the absence of grass in the Himalayan valleys must strike every observant traveller, it is a mistake to suppose that this is due to any quality in the soil or climate. It is owing to the uncommon strength and abundance of the indigenous vegetation, for whenever a tract of land is kept clear grasses spring up, and the imported species grow exceedingly well. The richness and flavour of the native vegetation is such that cattle, even when provided with European pasture, are apt to desert it in order to graze at large amid the forests and copses. However, in the central regions of the Himalayas land-leeches and a peculiar hoof-disease are great enemies to the stock.\*

In the "Vale of Cashmere" there are not only "roses the brightest that earth ever gave," but great crops of the rice which forms the staple of the people's food, and wheat,† barley, maize, and other cereals. Cabbages, turnips, cucumbers, lettuces, &c.,

\* Hodgson: "Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal," No. XXVII. (1857), p. 5.

† Some 20½ millions of acres, yielding 23,000,000 cwts. of wheat, are now returned in the wheat-producing tracts in the different provinces of India. According to the Agricultural Statistics for 1886 the area under wheat in India is about nine times as great as that in England, for in 1886 there were in Great Britain 2,286,064 acres under this crop. Dr. Forbes Watson (Parliamentary "Report on Indian Wheat," 1879) ranks



are retailed at ridiculously low prices, while the wonderful crops of walnuts, mulberries, peaches, cherries, pomegranates, nuts, apples, quinces, pears, and grapes are grown almost without care on flats of ground many of which bear no appearance of having been cultivated for many generations. Grapes, indeed, grow in some eighteen different varieties, and may be bought at the rate of several pounds for an anna, or rather less than three-halfpence. Peaches, better flavoured than our hot-house ones, are valued at about the same price for a dozen, and other fruits can be bought in "the happy valley" about equally as cheap. The faith of so many of the Indian people forbidding the use of wine, viticulture is never likely to form a



THE GREAT BANYAN TREE (*FICUS INDICA*) IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, CALCUTTA.

prominent branch of agriculture, unless, indeed, it were taken up by Europeans. Already the beer brewed at the Hill Stations has to a great extent superseded that which was once so extensively imported, and hop-growing has likewise become common in some of the cooler mountain valleys. Light wines could, however, be easily prepared in various parts of India, as, for example, in Kashmir. Wine was, indeed, at one time made from the grapes grown in the valley, and at times large jars are disinterred which are supposed to have been vessels for the reception of the generous fluid,

India fourth in the list of wheat-producing countries, placing the United States, France, and Russia before her. In the Punjab, North-Western Provinces, and Oudh, and in the Central Provinces, the average yield per acre stands at  $13\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $11\frac{3}{4}$ , and 8 bushels respectively. Irrigation, the use of manures, and higher cultivation have, however, more to do with the extra out-turn of the acreage in these districts than the degrees of latitude; and as the improved system of cultivation becomes more generally known and more widely practised among the ryots, the Indian wheat trade may increase. See Professor Wallace in *Journal of the Farmer's Club*, December, 1887.



buried for its better preservation, as is still the case in some parts of the East. Cider could also, if properly prepared, be produced in any quantity from the Kashmir apples; and though the climate is not warm enough for the sugar-cane to thrive, yet cotton of good quality can be produced without the irrigation necessary for so many other crops in that part of the country. The Deodar cedar is abundant, and the poplar, willow, and other trees grow wild, in addition to the plane or Chenar tree, which was introduced over two centuries ago, but is now so well naturalised that it is to be seen everywhere, its noble expanse affording a grateful shade to the inhabitants of the villages and farms; and from their presence near the ruined palaces they seem to have been equally appreciated by the royal personages who in time past inhabited these buildings. Aloes, chiretta, rhubarb, wormwood, and other useful plants grow wild, and mile after mile of country is patched yellow with the fields of saffron, which forms a valuable crop in this favoured land.\*

Kashmir has been dwelt on not only because it is typical of the Sub-Himalayan countries enjoying the same climate, but because it affords a peculiarly excellent field for European emigration, which would not only be highly beneficial to India and the people among whom the colonists would settle, but likely to be conducive to the welfare of the immigrants themselves. The climate is excellent, the soil fertile, land easily acquired, security for life and property good; and it is evident that with proper care as to the articles grown a good market might be found in India among the European residents and troops. Meantime, owing to indifferent government, recklessness, and want of foresight, one of the richest countries in the world is subject to periodical famines, for which there is on the part of the rulers absolutely no excuse. The mango-groves afford pleasant relief to the eye wearied with gazing on the sunburnt plains of Hindostan; and the great spreading banyan, or fig-tree, which increases by sending down subsidiary stem-like roots from the branches under it, spreads over a space sufficient for a little army to encamp on (p. 197). To the Hindoo the palm is what the bamboo is to the Chinese—food, clothing, drink, timber, shelter, shade; and as his food consists almost solely of grains and vegetables, the nature of his country's products fits in conveniently to his religion, if, indeed, his religion were not moulded by the products and climate of his country. In most parts of India there are two harvests yearly, and in some quarters there are three. Bajra, a small, round, very nourishing grain, the *Holcus spicatus* of botanists, jowar, or sorghum, common in the Levant, Greece, and Italy, and rice and other cereals are sown at the beginning and reaped at the end of the rainy season. Wheat, barley, and various other kinds of grain and pulses are grown during the cold weather and reaped in spring. But it is a mistake to suppose that the people of India live entirely on rice. In British Burmah, Concan (Bombay), Malabar, and the lower parts of Bengal rice is the staple crop; but in the Punjab and Hindostan proper wheat and millet constitute the main food-supplies; and in the Deccan a poor kind of grain known as "ragee" † takes the place of the cereals grown in other parts of the country. The sugar-cane abounds in Rohileund and Madras, and the great cotton-fields of Berar, Khandesh, and Guzerat are not unknown

\* Wakefield: "The Happy Valley" (1879), pp. 137—140.

† *Eleusine coracana*. It is also cultivated in Japan and on the Coramandel coast, where it is called "Natchnee."



in Manchester and Liverpool. Malwa and Bengal grow the poppies which supply the opium, that yields so large an addition by dubious moral means to the Indian revenue, and Bengal is the home of the indigo and jute which are now so indispensable to the world's comfort and convenience. In Coorg, Wynaad, and the Neilgherries coffee is grown, and the tea-gardens of Assam, Cachar, Sylhet, and the southern slopes of the Himalayas, from Kangra to Darjeeling, are—as we shall by-and-by see—likely before long to seriously affect the long-established monopoly of China. The quinine yielded by the cinchona-trees introduced by Mr. Markham and his assistants (p. 196) into the cool regions of the Neilgherry and Darjeeling Hills is so excellent that already we are practically independent of the precarious and ever-decreasing supplies of the Peruvian bark; while the ipecacuanha is another medicinal plant which seems to thrive in the Sikkim Terai. Finally, not to enumerate a hundred other products, cardamoms and pepper abound along the Western Ghats, hemp and linseed are largely exported, and tobacco is widely grown throughout India.\*

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## CHAPTER IX.

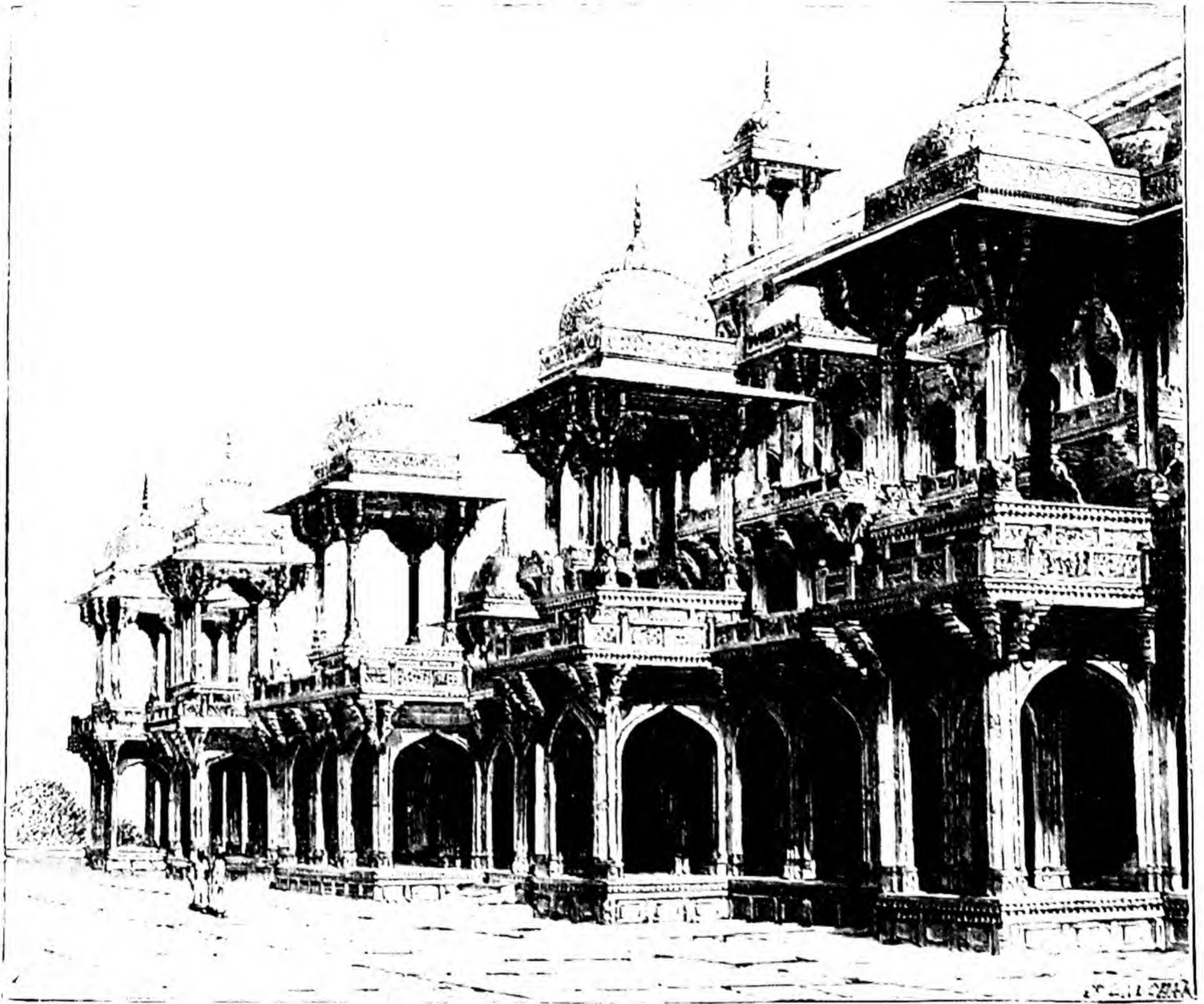
### INDIA: ITS POLITICAL DIVISIONS.

THE history of this great empire is an interesting topic, but it is foreign to our subject, and even in the briefest outline would occupy more space than we can spare to it. From the remote period when it was divided into numerous aboriginal tribes, more or less barbarous, to the day when it fell under the control of a strong hand, its chronicles have been full of war and bloodshed. Its period of peace has been short, for when the comparatively short-lived Mohammedan empire fell to pieces, and the lieutenants of the "Great Mogul" fought amongst each other for the fragments, the country was in a continual turmoil; and it may be safely said—without expressing any opinion on the vexed questions of Indian policy—that at no period of their existence have the Indian people enjoyed greater peace and prosperity than they do under the power which at present holds the reins of empire. The first historical account of India which we possess is contained in the Veddas, Sanscrit poems which contain the groundwork of the earliest system of philosophy known to us. These chronicles are obscure, and seem mainly to refer to the spread of the Aryans from the high plains of Asia to the lower lands of India. This must have taken centuries, but the date of the events referred to is about 1400 B.C. The march of Alexander the Great as far as the Sutlej, occurred in 350 B.C., and may be taken as the first great landmark in a period of vague, misty traditions.

\* Andrews: "India and her Neighbours," pp. 12, 13; and the various publications of the India Museum. See also "Reports on the Moral and Material Progress of India," and Birdwood: "Arts of India" (1880).



The Greek colony which he founded in Bactria was never flourishing, though it existed up almost to the period of the Christian era. In 550 B.C., in Northern India, was born the Prince Sakya, who founded that religious outcome of the Vedic theology known as Buddhism, which, spreading with almost unexampled rapidity, has become the faith of the greater portion of Asia, though it has now almost entirely disappeared from the land of its birth, in which for a time it was equally dominant.

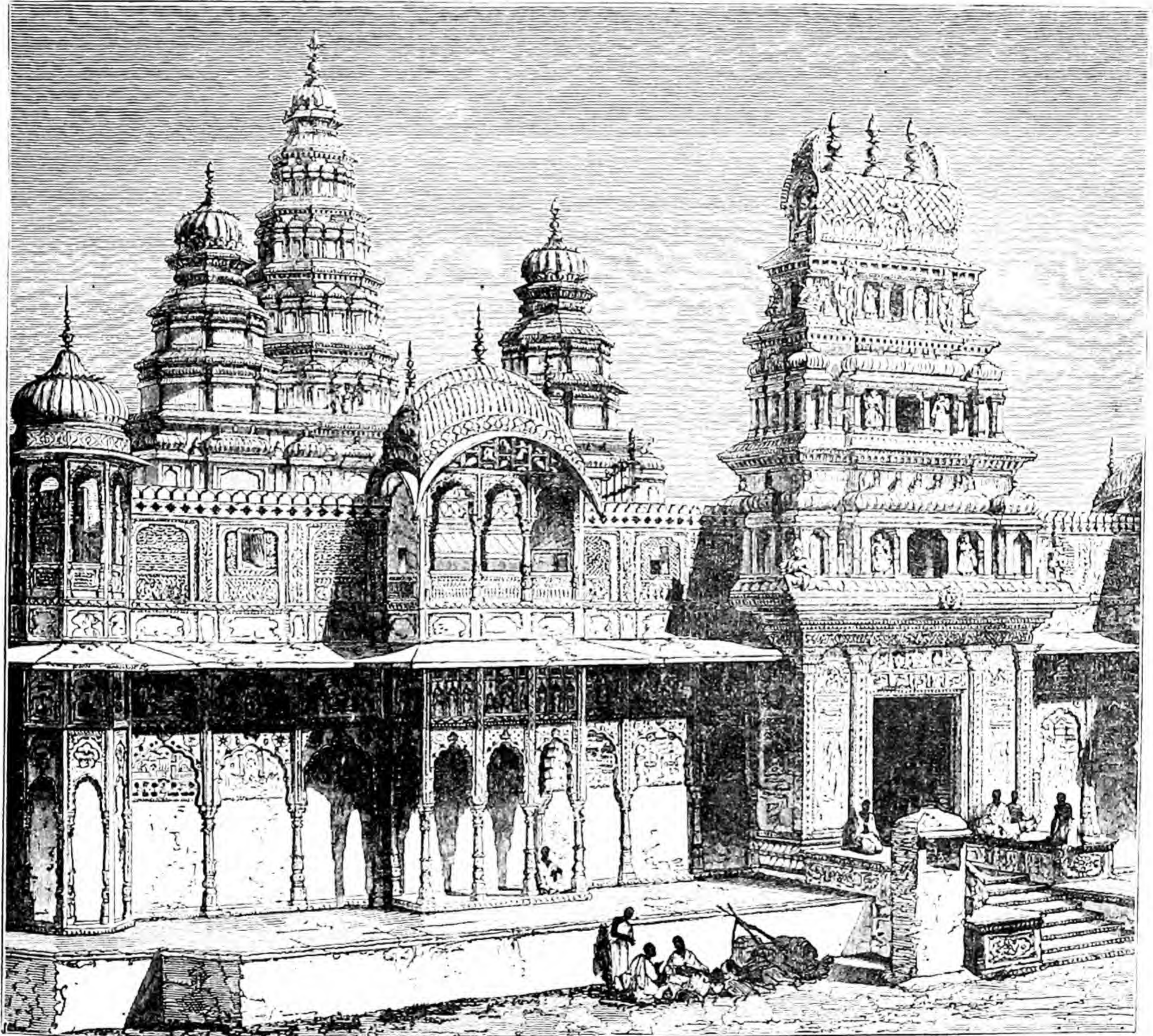


THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE EMPEROR AKBAR, AT SIKANDRA, A SUBURB OF AGRA CITY.

Until we again come to tangible history in the shape of the Mohammedan invasion and conquests the annals of India consist mainly of lists of kings of various dynasties settled in different parts of the country. The native kings were in a feeble condition when, in 1526, Baber, sixth in descent from Timour Leng, or "the Lame," commonly called by European writers Tamerlane, the scourge of a great part of Asia, seized the opportunity of making a descent through the Afghan passes on Delhi. Long before this date the Arabs had made plundering expeditions to India, and had even founded dynasties. Mahmūd of Ghuzni, in 1001, permanently established the Mohammedan power in India, and under Genghiz Khan, the Moguls, or Mongols, had as



early as 1212 arrived at the frontier, and for three hundred years rarely allowed a generation to pass without making inroads further and further into the country. Tamerlane, indeed, laid waste a great portion of Hindostan, but to Baber is due the distinction of having founded that Mogul empire which lasted until our day. Humayun, Akbar (p. 200), Jehanghir, Shah Jehan, and Aurungzebe, with varying fortunes, increased and consolidated this



TEMPLE OF RAMA, POSHKUR.

magnificent and dissolute empire. But the latter, though a man of great ability, was bigoted and treacherous, and before his death he had sown those seeds of decay which under his incompetent successors brought the Mohammedan rule to a close; though for a century after his death the empire dragged on, first under Mahratta sufferance, then under an English protectorate, until the villainy of the King of Delhi at the period of the Mutiny finally ended even the nominal rule of the successors of Baber. This was in 1857, but long before that date a great portion of the country had become actually independent.



Indeed, as early as 1721 the Deccan, Oudh, and Bengal had become practically dissevered from the empire. About the beginning of the eighteenth century the Mahrattas, a Hindoo race, had begun to grow powerful under a chieftain named Sivaji, and by 1760 they had captured Delhi, where they remained up to 1818 the scourge of India and the most dangerous opponents of the growing English "raj." The East India Company first obtained a foothold in India in 1602, and for a time had to strive with the Portuguese, Dutch, Danes, and French; but soon the last were their only rivals worthy of the name. For a time, nevertheless, it seemed as if the French, and not the English, were to found an European empire in India. However, by the capture of Pondicherry in 1761, Clive struck the final blow at the French power; and henceforward the English had only the native princes, to whom they were up to that date little better than suffragans, to contend with.

Warren Hastings was the first Governor-General of British India, and under his successors—McPherson, Cornwallis, Teignmouth, Wellesley, Barlow, Minto, Moira, Amherst, Bentinck, Auckland, Ellenborough, Hardinge, and Dalhousie—foe after foe of England succumbed, until, with the exception of a few native kingdoms with nominal independence, the greater part of the country acknowledged the rule, actual or indirect, of the Governor-General in Calcutta, and his various subalterns in the different presidencies, provinces, commissionerships, and native States. Lord Canning's rule was not so prosperous. The discontent which had been long brewing broke out on the 10th of May, 1857, in the mutiny of the Bengal army, and rapidly, by preconcerted arrangement, spread throughout the country. But in little more than a year, by the strenuous efforts put forth, it was effectually crushed, and with it came to a close the famous East India Company, whose history, in spite of their many mistakes—and crimes—forms one of the most brilliant volumes in the chronicles of England and the English. On the 1st of November, 1858, the country passed under the direct rule of the Queen; and ever since, the policy of the Viceroys—Elgin, Lawrence, Mayo, Northbrook, Lytton, Ripon, and Dufferin—has been imperial. In 1877 the Queen formally assumed the title of *Kaisar-i-Hind* (Empress of India); and of late years the tendency of the Government has been, while educating the natives to take an intelligent share in the government of their country, to gradually consolidate all parts of the empire into one, so far as this can be done without outrage to the customs or religious prejudices of the heterogeneous races of the immense region over which the British sway extends. A recent step in this direction is the annexation of some of the Afghan passes and of the kingdom of Independent or Upper Burmah, and the seating of our nominee on the throne of Cabul, with guarantees for his good conduct, which, so far as Afghanistan can be depended upon not to go to the highest bidder, may cause the present ruler to oppose any enemy in that direction.\*

A few words on each of the great administrative departments (some of which are large kingdoms, more populous than most of those in Europe) into which the country has been divided may now be given. Bengal, Madras, and Bombay are known as presidencies, but the term is no longer accurate. It refers to a period when the English

\* Cassell's "History of India," and the works of Mill, Marshman, Thornton, Trotter, Sewell, Owen, Mahon, Low, Sherring, Wheeler, Torrens, Routledge, Duncan, Hill, Forsyth, Arnold, Elliot, and Monier-Williams.



settlements of Fort William, Fort St. George, and Bombay were ruled by a president, who at that period was more a trade superintendent than a political governor. Nowadays these "presidencies" in the old sense no longer exist, and Bengal, instead of being one government, such as it was in the days when the term originated, has been broken up into several. Altogether, British India is divided into eight great local governments, each of which is independent of the others, and possesses its own civil government, but is subordinate to the supreme Government, the seat of which is Calcutta, or, during the hot season, Simla, where the gubernatorial machinery is temporarily located.

### BENGAL.

Up to 1853 this vast region was administered directly by the Governor-General, but in that year it was made a separate province under a Lieutenant-Governor. It is, notwithstanding the large slices which have been cut out of it, still very large and populous, containing 156,564 square miles, and over 67,000,000 people. It is thus the most extensive and densely populated of all the Indian provinces, and as its revenue is nearly eighteen millions of pounds, it may be said to contribute over one-fourth of the national income of the empire of which it forms part. Its surface is diversified, and comprises the basin of the Ganges, including Bengal proper, and Behar, which is perhaps as thickly inhabited and fertile a region as the world knows of, and the country of Chota Nagpore and Orissa to the west and south-west, which is ill watered, and in consequence subject to periodical famines and other woes. The valleys of Bengal, though for the most part luxuriant alluvial plains, are diversified by the spurs and peaks thrown out by the "great mountain systems which wall them on the north-west and south-west." Sir William Hunter, from whose works we derive almost our entire data regarding Bengal, remarks that Bengal contains almost every product of the tropics and temperate regions, from the fierce beasts and irrepressible vegetation of the equatorial jungles, to the stunted barley which the hillman rears, and the tiny fur animals which he hunts within sight of the perpetual snows. "Tea, indigo, turmeric, lac, waving white fields of the opium poppy, wheat, and innumerable grains and pulses, pepper, ginger, betel-nut, quinine, and many costly spices and drugs, oil-seeds of all sorts, cotton, the silk mulberry, inexhaustible crops of jute and other fibres, timber, from the feathery bamboo and coroneted palm to the iron-hearted *sal* tree—in short, every vegetable product which feeds and clothes a people, and enables it to trade with foreign nations, abounds." The soil near the sea consists of alluvial formations, and indeed it is affirmed that throughout the Delta, or within 400 miles of the river mouths, in the heart of the province, not a stone is to be found. In the hills and broken country on either side coal, iron and copper ores exist, and in the west the coal-fields yield a large output, though they are imperfectly developed.

The climate of Bengal varies in different parts. In one section it is cooled by the blasts from the snowy regions of the Himalaya, in another the residents live in the vapour-bath of the Delta, or parch under the influence of the burning winds of Behar. But altogether, Bengal is a hot—a very hot—province. The thermometer will often read



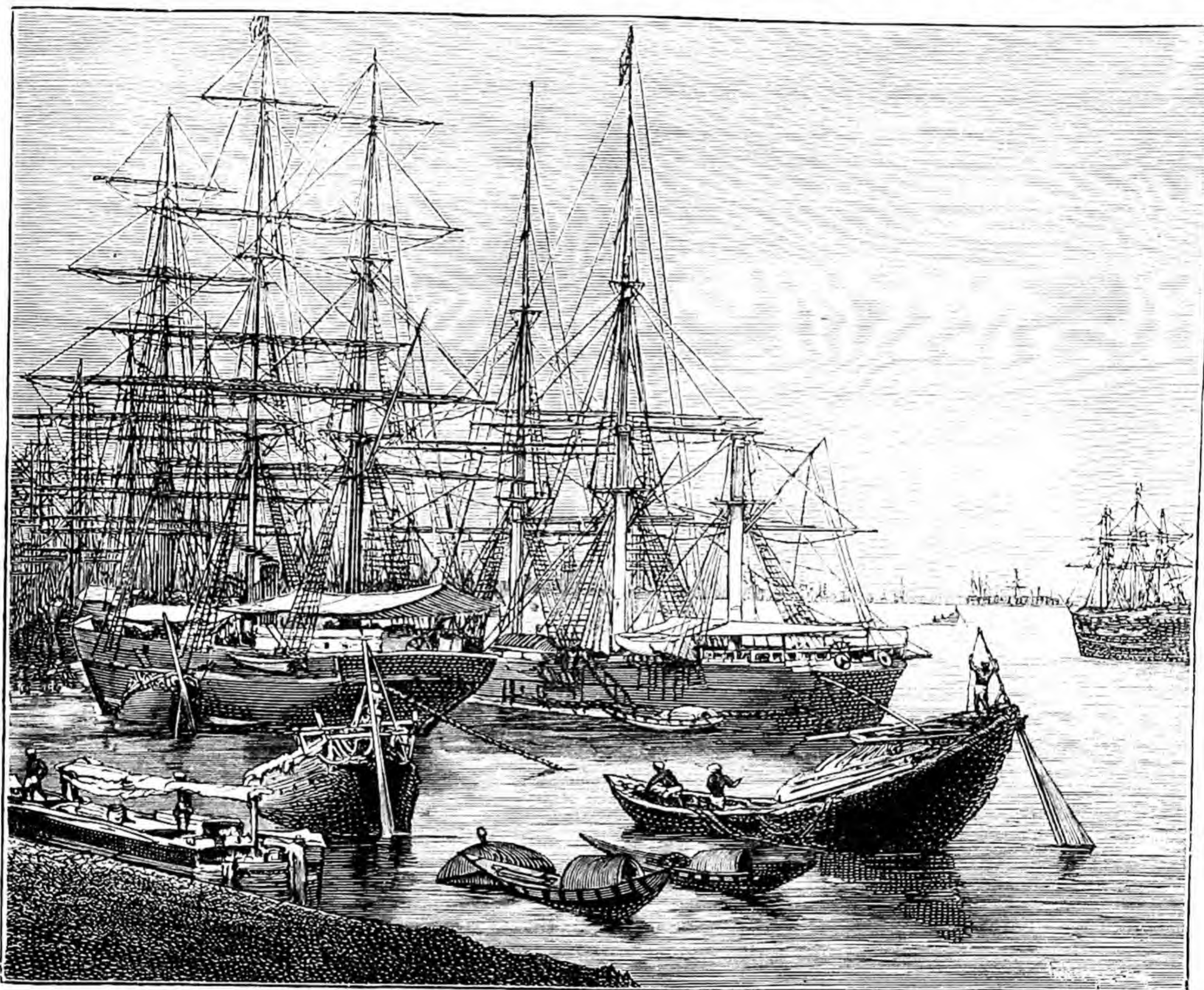
103° in the shade during the warm months, and if it falls below 60° the weather is accounted very cold. However, by the aid of *punkahs*, or great fans, and other contrivances, the atmosphere of well-built houses is not usually, even during the heats, higher than 95°, which is, however, a temperature utterly enervating while it lasts.

Bengal owes everything to its rivers—the chief of which are the Ganges and Brahmapootra—which enable the traders to carry on these untaxed highways the products of an immense region of country, and, in addition to daily adding to the extent of the Delta by their floods, deposit alluvium which yearly supplies fresh soil to the ryot or farmer, renders elaborate culture unnecessary, and puts any fear of exhausting the soil by over-cropping out of the question. “As the rivers creep further down the Delta they become more and more sluggish, and their bifurcations and interlacings more and more complicated. The last scene of all is a vast amphibious wilderness of swamp and forest, amid whose solitudes their network of channels insensibly merges into the sea. Here the perennial struggle between earth and ocean goes on, and all the ancient secrets of land-making stand disclosed. The rivers, finally checked by the dead weight of the sea, deposit their remaining silt, which emerges as banks or blunted promontories, or after a year’s battling with the tide, adds a few feet, or it may be a few inches, to the foreshore.” At the time of the annual inundations the country in the lower part of the Delta presents the appearance of an immense sea. Hundreds of square miles of the rice-fields are submerged to a great depth, the ears of grain floating on the surface, while in all directions peasants may be seen going to their daily work with their cattle on rafts or in canoes. Indeed, what with the Ganges and Brahmapootra, and their tributaries, and the lakes, rivulets, and other water-courses, there are many parts of Bengal where it is possible to sail up to the door of almost every cottage. However, as has already been noticed, the vagaries of the rivers add to and diminish estates in such an unexpected but persistent manner, that in course of ages a particular branch of jurisprudence has grown up, the province of which is “the definition and regulation of the alluvial rights alike of private property and of the State.”

Bengal contains within its area over a million and a quarter more people than the whole inhabitants of England and Wales, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece, and the Ionian islands, with the total white, Indian, and Chinese population of the United States. These millions comprise various nationalities and religions, and differ from each other widely as to the grade of civilisation they have attained to. In a day’s journey we may meet the highly-educated Hindoo gentleman, who is more familiar with Theodore Parker and Comte than half of the Oxford graduates, and could discuss as learnedly Sanscrit philosophy and the Shashtras as he could Fichte and Herbert Spencer; and side by side with him, creeping along, the rude hillman, on whose altars, in spite of police vigilance, was offered up not many years ago an idiot as a human sacrifice to appease the deities represented by the members of the English Privy Council, before whom the chieftain had then an appeal. “On the same bench of a Calcutta college,” writes the historian of Bengal, “sit youths trained up in the strictest theism, others indoctrinated in the mysteries of the Hindoo trinity and pantheon, with representatives of every link in the chain of superstition—from the harmless offering of flowers before the family god, to the cruel rites of Kali,



whose altars in the most civilised district of Bengal, as lately as the famine of 1866, were stained with human blood." Even the Hindoos, taking that term in its most restricted sense, are as near akin to us as are the Irish, Welsh, and Scottish Highlanders, for they speak a language sprung from the Sanscrit, and nearer allied to English than are the Celtic dialects. The Mussulmans exceed twenty-one million souls, and so far as numbers go, Sir W. Hunter justly remarks, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is as



THE PORT OF CALCUTTA.

great a Mohammedan power as the Sultan of Turkey himself. To again use the eloquent words of the Director-General of Indian statistics: "Amid the stupendous catastrophes of the seasons, the river inundations, famines, tidal waves, and cyclones of the Lower Provinces of Bengal, the religious instinct works with a vitality unknown in European countries, where the forces of nature have long yielded to the control of man. Until the British Government stepped in with its police, and canals, and railroads between the people and what they were accustomed to consider the dealings of Providence, scarcely a year passed without some terrible manifestation of the power and wrath of God. Mahratta invasions from Central India, piratical devastations on the seaboard,

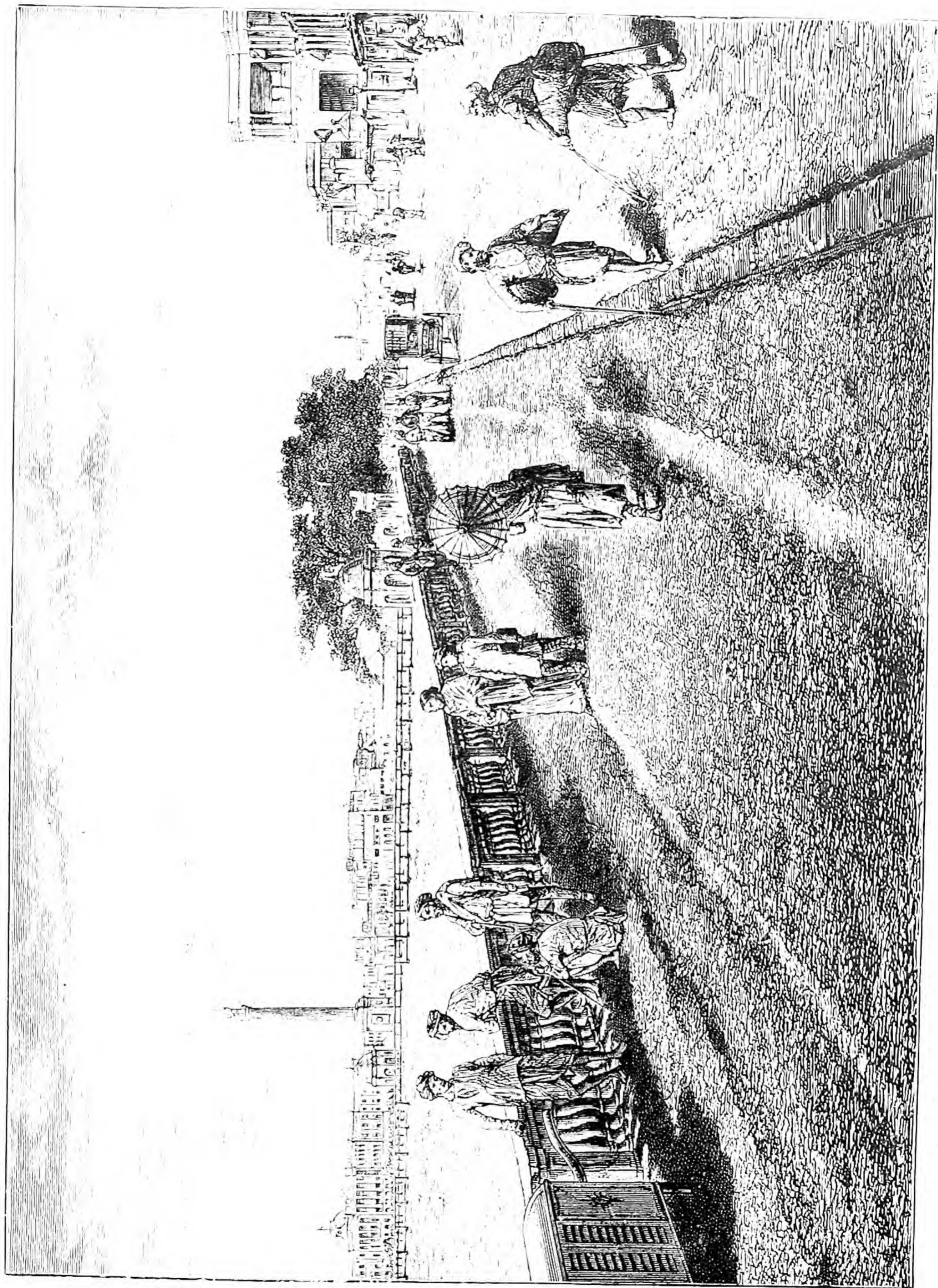


banditti who marched about the interior in bodies of 50,000 men, floods which drowned the harvests of whole districts, and droughts in which a third of the population starved to death, kept alive a sense of human powerlessness in the presence of an Omnipotent fate with an intensity which the homilies of a stipendiary clergy fail to awaken. Under the Mohammedans a pestilence turned the capital into a silent wilderness, never again to be re-peopled. Under our own rule it is estimated that ten millions perished within the Lower Provinces alone in the famine of 1769-70; and the first Surveyor-General of Bengal entered on his maps a tract of many hundreds of square miles as bare of villages, and 'depopulated by the Maghs.' Education is well attended to in Bengal, and schools, supported or aided by Government, or of the "hedge" type, are numerous and increasing. Courts of justice are plentiful, and moderately cheap in their process. The country is being rapidly intersected by roads and railways, and though there is still much to be desired in this respect, greater control than formerly is being exercised over the rivers and the natural water supply, by storing it in tanks, on which the safety of a country like Bengal greatly depends. The Government also watches over the emigration from the over-populated or sterile districts of the West to the rich under-populated territories in the East, and controls the importation of "coolies" to the West Indies and other colonies beyond the sea. Charitable dispensaries are being distributed over the country, so that the epidemics which once raged unopposed are less fatal than formerly; and though checks have at times been put on the licence of the vernacular press, the Bengalee cannot complain that he is oppressed intellectually or otherwise. Sir W. Hunter estimates the taxation for civil administration alone at less than 1s. 11d. per head. But where wages are so low and earnings so trifling this sum must not be gauged by the European standard. There are as yet no representative institutions in any of the Indian provinces. But the Hindoos' capacity for local self-government is great. Their village system, as has already been pointed out,\* is a very perfect and simple form of municipality, and in the large cities like Calcutta town councils after the English fashion exist in full working order. Bengal, under its native rulers, had large towns which no longer exist. They are overgrown by jungle, washed into the rivers, or, having been devastated by famine, war, or pestilence, have been deserted and allowed to fall into ruins. On the other hand, under British rule many market centres, such as Nawabganj and Sirajganj, have sprung up, and languishing cities have attained great size and prosperity. On the Bay of Bengal there are ten or twelve considerable ports, of which the principal is Chittagong, from which most of the rice is shipped. But the chief commercial transactions are carried on in the large inland towns like Patna and Calcutta. Indeed, it may be said that the trade of Bengal practically centres in the last-named city, from which rice, opium, indigo, jute, tea, oil-seeds, silk, cotton, &c., are exported, and through which every class of European goods is imported.

Calcutta—the "Kali Ghatta," or the goddess Kali's landing-place—is situated on one of the branches of the Ganges, above one hundred miles from the sea (Platè XLVI., and p. 205), and stretches about five miles along the river banks, covering altogether an area of

\* "The Peoples of the World," Vol. IV., p. 60.





ON THE COURSE (MAIDAN), CALCUTTA, WITH A VIEW OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND THE OCHTERLONY MONUMENT.



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eight square miles. When the English first settled here in 1686 the city could scarcely be said to exist, its nucleus being three villages which were presented to the East India Company by the Emperor of Delhi. Calcutta was in reality the name of one of these villages, though for a time the new settlement took its name from Fort William, which had been erected to defend the factories, and which fort—or, at least, another under the same name—still exists. Since those days, in spite of many vicissitudes, it has prospered greatly, and now contains about half a million inhabitants, of whom not over nine thousand are Europeans: the majority are Hindoos and Mohammedans. If, however, the suburbs and three smaller municipalities on the opposite side of the river are added, the population of Calcutta is not less than 800,000. The poorer quarters of the city are squalid, but the newer streets are fine and spacious, lighted with gas, and supplied with water in greater abundance and of a better quality than that doled out to London. It has been called the “city of palaces,” and certainly its numerous fine public buildings entitle it to that lofty designation. Its manufactures are numerous and increasing, and there seems no likelihood that the prosperity of the city will ever suffer a serious check. The other Bengal cities are more modest in their dimensions, and more native; but even they are rapidly advancing in European improvements, and the population year by year becoming more and more familiar with the language, customs, and even prejudices of the dominant race.

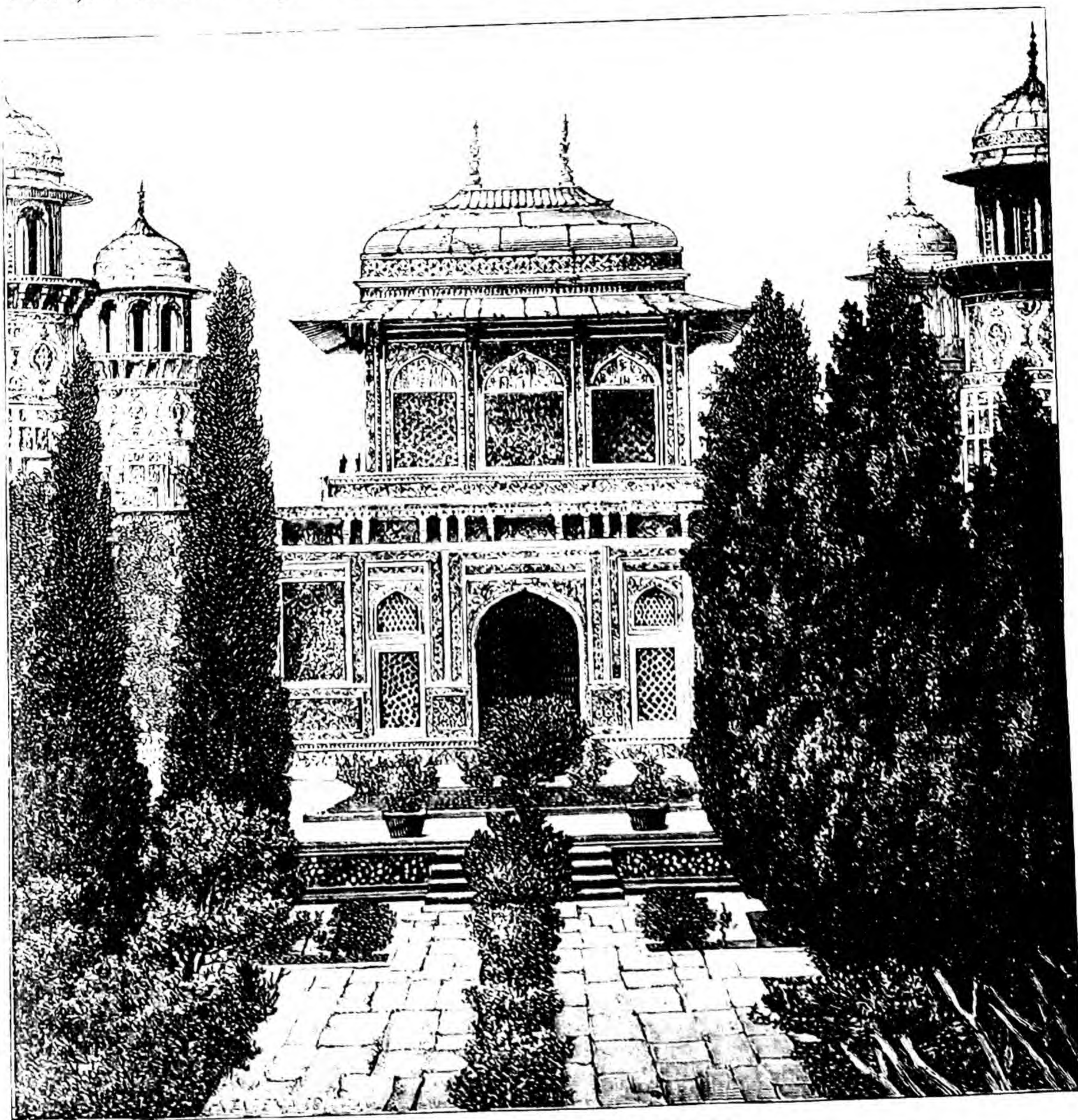
Bengal was in the early days of the English conquests in India a vague term covering nearly the whole of the British territory, and, as “the Company’s” establishments “crept up the river,” the “Bengal Presidency” came to mean really the whole of Northern India. But in 1831 the North-West Provinces were separated from this territory, and at a later date Oudh and the Punjab arose as the limits of the British rule extended. At present Bengal means the “Lower Bengal,” and consists of four divisions; for in 1874 Assam was erected into a separate commissionership. Three of these provinces—viz., Bengal Proper, Behar, and Orissa—consist of river valleys, but Chota Nagpore is a mountain region which separates them from the central plateau of India. Finally, for administrative purposes, Bengal is divided into forty-seven districts, each ruled by separate officials, but all responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor, who in his turn must answer for his acts to the Viceroy and Council in Calcutta, and they in their turn to the Secretary of State for India, and generally to Her Majesty’s Ministers and Parliament.

Unlike the Governors of Bombay and Madras, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal has no Executive Council to divide the responsibility or the glory of his rule with. He is watched over with discreet jealousy by the Governor-General and *his* Council, but practically he stands alone, issues orders in his own name, and bears the brunt or reaps the reward of his every act. However, in making laws he is assisted by a Legislative Council, consisting of his chief officers and the leading members of the non-official European and native communities, who are, however, not elected, but appointed by the Government.

Finally, Sir W. Hunter insists that so long as the English hold the port of Calcutta and the rich provinces of Bengal, they will possess sufficient power to enable them to



recover India should any accident ever shake their sway in the Punjab and North-Western Provinces. But the vast income of Lower Bengal—about £18,000,000, of which £8,678,000 or so is surplus after defraying the cost of government—is not derived from



THE MAUSOLEUM OF I'TMADDOWLAH, AGRA.

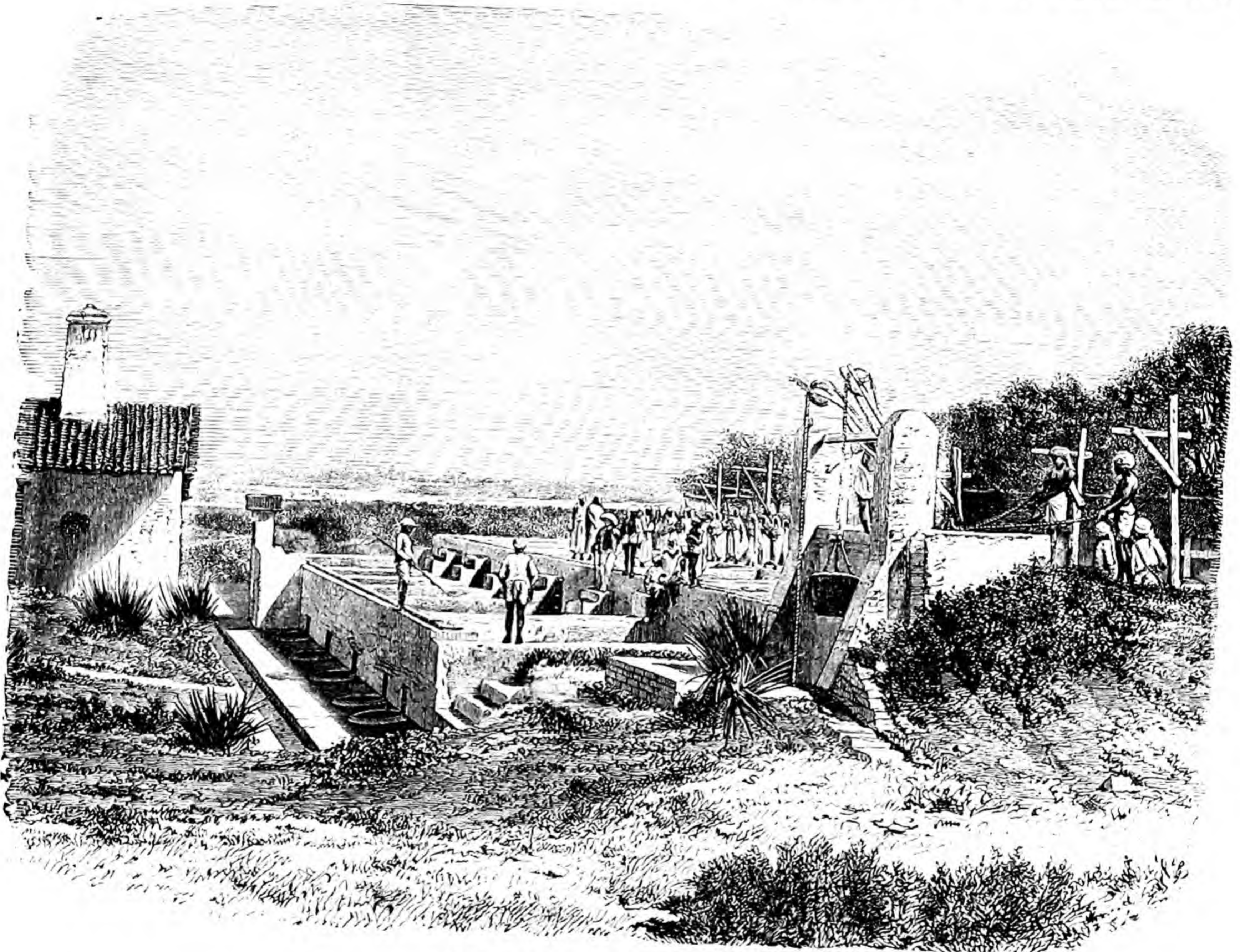
these provinces solely. China contributes £8,000,000 in the shape of opium duty, and the inland parts of India contribute about one-third of a million to the Bengal Customs. Roughly speaking, therefore, the Bengalees, in the shape of imperial, provincial, municipal, and rural taxation of every description, pay 3s. 5d. a head for their Government. It is, however, clear that the opium £8,000,000 cannot always continue, while the subsidiary revenue from inland States is precarious. But these are political questions which have



been long hotly debated; and though their discussion would be not without interest or importance, it does not strictly come within our scheme.\*

### THE NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Up to 1831 these territories constituted part of the Presidency of Bengal, but they are now under a separate Lieutenant-Governor. Including Oudh, which in 1876



INDIGO FACTORY AT ALLAHABAD.

was absorbed into them, they number a population of over 45,000,000, occupying a region of about 106,000 square miles, so that the country is almost as thickly populated as Bengal. In this region are included Meerut, Rohilkund, Agra, Allahabad, and Benares, in addition to Oudh, though since 1859, when the Punjab was erected into a separate lieutenant-governorship, Delhi was transferred to that province.

More than a thousand miles from Calcutta, and forty miles to the north of Delhi,

\* Hunter: "Statistical Account of India;" "Annals of Rural Bengal;" "Orissa;" and articles in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Dalton: "Ethnology of Bengal;" Campbell: "Administrative Reports from 1871-3;" Barton: "Bengal;" Grant-Duff: "Notes of an Indian Journey;" Dilke: "Greater Britain;" Cotton: "India," etc.



lies Meerut, a green and pleasant city, the centre of a district of the North-Western Provinces. Here the Mutiny of 1857 first broke out, and was unaccountably allowed to spread, the garrison officers being evidently not completely alive to the character of the plot which for months had been fermenting under their very eyes.

Rohileund is a fruitful, well-watered province; and Agra, though sadly fallen from its ancient grandeur, when it was the imperial city of Akbar, the "greatest and wisest," as he has been justly characterised, of the old Emperors of Hindostan. Agra is also famous for its mosques and tombs (pp. 200, 208), and is known for the Taj Mahal, that "dream in marble" which Akbar's grandson, Shah Jehan, reared at once as a tomb and a monument to his beautiful queen, Mumtaza Mahal, the "flower of the palace." Nothing like this wonderful building exists in India, and even in Florence its mosaics in *nicchia dura* are unequalled. Akbar himself lies in a mausoleum a few miles out of the city, so vast that a regiment of horse were on one occasion quartered in its arches (p. 200). Twenty miles off is Fathipore Sickri, the noble mosque of which is another of the many monuments remaining to attest the greatness and the misfortunes of Akbar. Thirty-five miles north-west of Agra is Muttra, an old Hindoo city famed for its shrines and sacred monkeys. Sir W. Andrews tells us that many years ago two young Englishmen in silly sport wounded one of these holy animals. Its screams and the chorus of its offended relatives attracted the inhabitants to the spot. In a frenzy of religious excitement they would have torn the Englishmen to pieces had they not forced the elephants they were riding into the river; but as this animal rolls when in the water, the offenders were drowned in mid-stream, the mahout, or driver, alone reaching the opposite bank.

Allahabad is the present capital of the North-Western Provinces, and from its commanding situation at the meeting-place of the waters of the Jumna and Ganges is important from a military and commercial point of view and, what in India is often quite as important, from a religious aspect also. It is about 500 miles from Calcutta, and contains a population of 150,000, which at certain seasons, when the pilgrims flock into it, is swollen to much greater numbers, the railways of which it is a centre enabling the pious to journey thither with greater ease and much more cheaply than they were able to do in former days. Allahabad is also the name of a "division" and a "district" which contains nearly a million and a half of souls. The division, in addition to four other districts, comprises that of Cawnpore, the centre of which is the city of the same name, on the left banks of the Ganges, containing 154,000 inhabitants, and doing a large trade in indigo, saddlery, and other leather manufactures. But Cawnpore will ever have a sad fame in Indian history on account of the share it took in the terrible events of the Mutiny.\* After the news of the rising at Meerut and Delhi reached the city, the native troops mutinied, and besieged the British residents and soldiers, who had taken refuge within the ill-chosen cantonments outside the city. After enduring terrible hardships in the defence, the survivors were promised safe conduct to Allahabad if they would surrender; but as they were embarking on the river they were fallen upon by Nana Sahib's ruffians, and many cruelly

\* Keene: "Fall of the Moghul Empire;" Kaye: "History of the Sepoy War;" "Statistical Account of the Delhi District;" and the works of Hunter, Rousselet, Andrews, Schlagintweit, and numerous other recent writers.

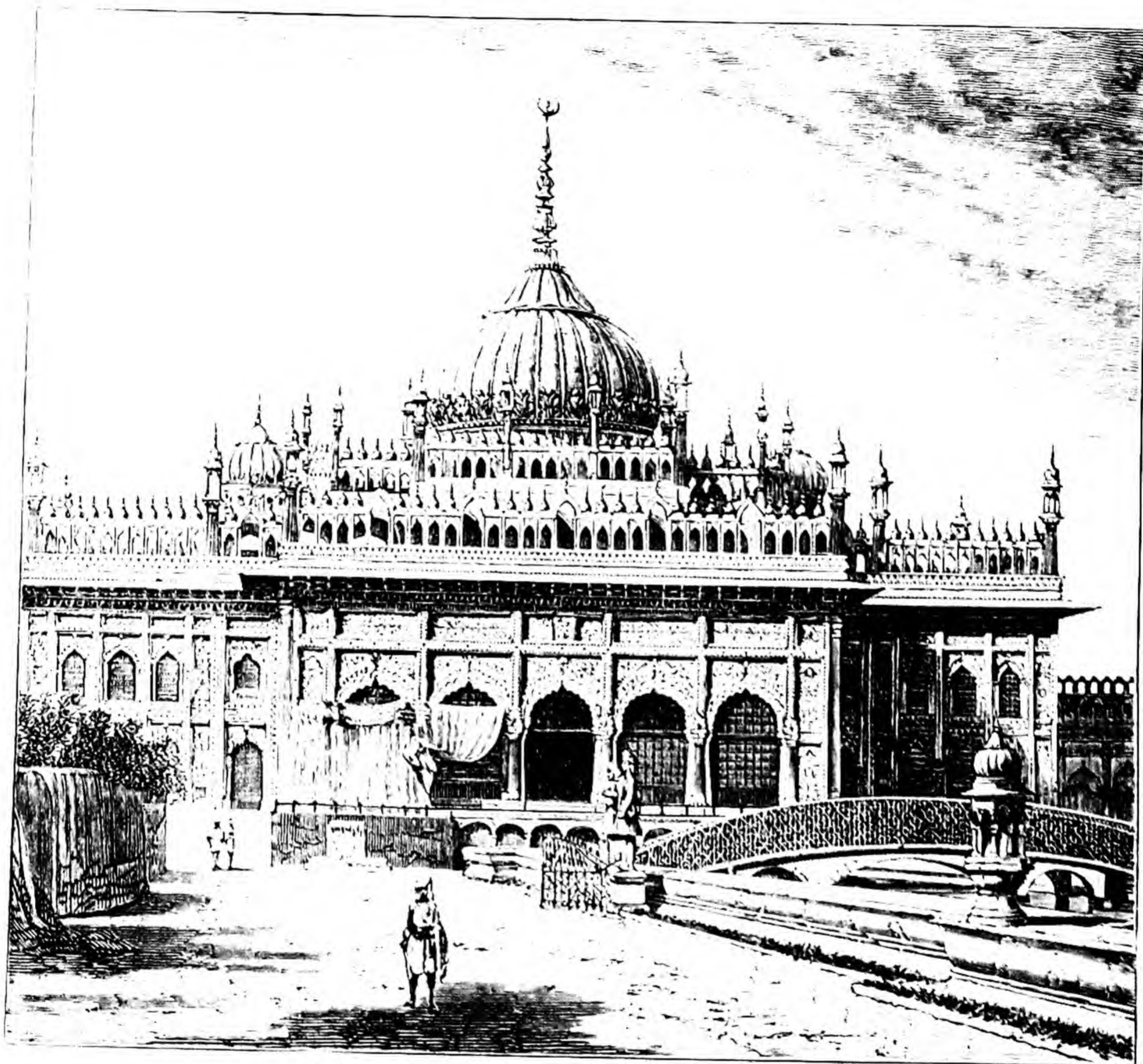


massacred. Only four survived to tell the tale; and the remainder spared from the river-slaughter were remorselessly butchered on the news reaching the city of the successive defeats of the mutineers by the relieving armies. Finally Havelock succeeded in recapturing it, though unhappily the head of the rebels, Nana Sahib, succeeded in escaping with his immediate followers, and has never since been seen by any one who cared or who was strong enough to hand him over to justice. A monument is now erected over the well into which so many of the slaughtered women, children, and men, as well as those who fell during the siege, were thrown, and a lovely garden covers the place which was, in the memory of so many still living, the scene of such horrors. Cawnpore District is a portion of the well-watered and fertile country known as the Doab. It supports over a million and a half of people, mostly engaged in agriculture or its collateral industries. Their staple is wheat, but cotton of a good quality has of late been cultivated, in addition to the usual crops of the North-Western Provinces.

Benares is an even more important and an infinitely holier division, district, and town than Cawnpore. Its merits in this respect have already been noticed; but in modern times the commercial importance of the place is likely to compete with its religious reputation. Yet undoubtedly to both its trading and sacred advantages Benares owes its celebrity, as well as to the fact that from the most ancient times it has been the seat of a native kingdom. Indeed, if the chronicles are to be credited, a Hindoo rajah ruled here 1,200 years before Christ was born; and ever since the Indian historians have been comparatively trustworthy they have recorded the struggles of rival adventurers for the possession of Benares. The rebellion of Cheyte Singh, owing to the unjust demands of Warren Hastings, and the Mutiny of the native regiments in 1857, are its most important events in later times. The first incident figured extensively in the trial of the Governor-General, and the second resulted unsuccessfully so far that the district was never for an hour lost to British rule. Though the neighbouring country is very fertile, and would therefore support a large population, its temples attract pilgrims quite as much as its bazaars, heaped with sugar, saltpetre, indigo, silk, shawls, vessels of brass, filagree work, and the gold-embroidered cloths which are famous under the name of "kincob." "Twenty-five centuries ago at least," writes the Rev. Mr. Sherring, "it was famous. When Babylon was struggling with Nineveh for supremacy, when Tyre was planting her colonies, when Athens was growing in strength, before Rome had become known, or Greece had contended with Persia, or Cyrus added lustre to the Persian monarchy, or Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judæa had been carried into captivity, she had already risen to greatness, if not to glory. Nay, she may have heard of the fame of Solomon, and have sent her ivory, her apes, and her peacocks to adorn his palaces, while partly with her gold she may have overlaid the Temple of the Lord." In the seventh century of our era a Chinese pilgrim described it as containing thirty Buddhist monasteries and about a hundred Hindoo temples. Even yet, though the Buddhists have almost entirely vanished from the city, it is still great in its religious houses, rich in worldly goods, and, apart from its religious associations and ancient history, Benares is one of the most picturesque of the cities of India (pp. 185, 186). The first view of its domes and minarets from the bend of the Ganges on which the city is



built is by universal consent pronounced as fine a view of the kind as Hindostan has to offer. The banks of the river are lined with stone, and on the numerous "ghauts" (p. 187) devotees and pleasure-seekers loiter all day long, glad to escape from the stuffy streets, so narrow that a carriage cannot pass along, and affording even scant space for a man on horseback. The houses are in many cases picturesque, with verandahs,



THE HOOSSEINABAD IMAMBARA, OR MAUSOLEUM, LUCKNOW.

galleries, projecting oriel windows, and very broad overhanging eaves supported by carved brackets. Some of the buildings are five and six storeys in height, and the greater number are, after a favourite Hindoo fashion, painted a deep red colour, and adorned "with pictures of flowers, men, women, bulls, elephants, and gods and goddesses in all the multiform shapes known in Hindoo mythology." In Benares there is nowadays an English college, English churches, and English missionaries of several denominations, besides schools of different kinds. But most of the foreign residents do not live in the city itself, but at Sikrol, an extensive suburb on the north-west side of the



city, and where the military camp, the English educational institution, and the palace of the Maharajah, as well as the courts of law, the public garden, the blind and leper asylums, the jail, and other more or less pronounced European establishments, are situated.

*Oudh*—or Oude, as it is more commonly written—was until 1876 a separate commissionership, but it is now a division of the North-Western Provinces, and not the least important of them, since it is 270 miles long, 160 broad, and contains an area of 27,890 square miles, and a population which cannot be estimated at fewer than 13,000,000. The northern part of Oudh consists of the terai on the border of Nepaul, and is not very well known; but the rest of the country is a great plain sloping from north-west to south-east, and traversed by the Gumti, Ghogra, and Rapti, which are notorious throughout Hindostan owing to the swarm of alligators which infest them. The country is accounted one of the healthiest in the Ganges valley, and the soil, which is fertile, yields good crops of wheat, barley, grain, rice, tobacco, indigo, sugar-cane, and other crops. Some manufactures are carried on, particularly those of military weapons, woollen goods, paper, &c. But as a rule the inhabitants are warlike, and though for ages dominated by Mohammedan rulers, are for the most part Hindoos, and the prevailing tongue is likewise Hindostanee. This province, as it is still sometimes called, supplied the greater number of those sepoys to the Bengal army who obtained such infamy in the mutiny. Oudh, up to 1856, was independent, but was governed so atrociously that in the interest of the inhabitants of the kingdom and of their own territories the East India Company was forced to annex it. Murders, robberies, abductions, and extortions had for years been daily occurrences. No man's property was safe, and the inhabitants went about with their lives in their hands. "A feeble king, a blackguard soldiery, and a lawless peasantry" have been justly described as the three causes in combination which reduced the country to a helpless anarchy. In 1857 it was one of the centres of the Mutiny, and the defence of Lucknow will ever rank among the brightest and saddest episodes of that lurid period. The kingdom prior to the annexation was noted for the number of its ryots, or peasants who had a virtual ownership in the land they tilled, but they were sadly oppressed by the talukdars, or farmers of the revenue under the Great Mogul, whose extortions had in many cases reached that stage which compelled the unhappy peasants to surrender their lands to their tyrants. Hence at the present day, in spite of the confiscations which followed the mutiny, the talukdars own great estates, and pay Government revenue to the extent of over £700,000 per annum.

Awadh, or Oudh, is one of the principal and most ancient towns in the province, and Roy Bareilly and Shahabad are also places of consequence; but Lucknow is now the most celebrated and prosperous of the cities of Oudh, as well as its capital. It stands on the south-west banks of the Gumti, which from this point is navigable all the way to the Ganges. The town is said to be the oldest of any consequence in India, though it contains no building which seems of great antiquity. The central portion contains a few red brick houses and mud-huts roofed with straw; but on either side of this middle portion stretch



suburbs of handsome buildings, none of which are, however, over a century old. Within the last few years the city and its inhabitants have greatly improved. As late as 1856 everybody went about armed. Even the shopkeeper served his customer sword on thigh, and with his buckler ready to be grasped in case a dispute regarding the price arose, or a rival trader or robber proceeded to extremities. Still, in those days the city is said to have contained over 300,000 inhabitants, while, in the census of 1881, the number is placed at 261,303. "Its noble-looking mosques and semi-Italian palaces, surrounded sometimes by green and wooded parks, awaken in the mind a sense of grandeur and beauty which a nearer view of the streets and buildings does not tend to deepen." To this verdict of an eye-witness may be added the saving remark that some of the buildings and streets are handsome and well worth seeing. But it is not for its architectural attractions that visitors to India make a pilgrimage to Lucknow. Here in 1857 a handful of men and women held the Residency against the whole of the rebellious army of Oudh, and into this city marched Havelock and Campbell with those armies of relief which have long ago become historic. It is the events of that epoch that will ever give the capital of Oudh a prominent place in history and in romance.

#### THE PUNJAB.

The Panjab, or Panjab, the Pentapotamia of the Greeks, or, as the name literally means, the land of the five rivers, is a country containing about 106,632 square miles, watered by the Indus and its five great tributaries. The northern part of the country consists of spurs of the Himalayas enclosing deep valleys, or level country intersected by these spurs, while the southern part is for the most part more or less unbroken land, save where the Salt Range, varying in height from 2,000 to 5,000 feet, wedges itself in between the Indus and the Jhelum. The five doabs of the Punjab are the five interfluvial tracts or "plains of the Indus." These tracts are well suited for agriculture, in spite of little or no rain often falling for long periods; but the proximity of so many rivers enables the peasant to obtain a plentiful supply of water for irrigation. The agriculture is, however, backward, and trees are so few and small that the excrement of cows is commonly used for fuel. The soil varies. In some parts it is stiff clay, in others loam, but for the most part it is sandy and barren, unless when rendered fruitful by means of artificial watering. Accordingly, fine crops of wheat, barley, buckwheat, rice, tobacco, opium, indigo, maize, and numerous other products of the Indian climate are grown. The climate, it may be remarked, is one of the least agreeable in India. In summer the plains are oppressively hot and dry, though this is compensated for by the parched residents getting invigorated by the cool, and even frosty, months of winter. In the great towns like Delhi, Amritsir, Lahore, and Mooltan some manufacturing industry is carried on; but of the inhabitants as a whole it is difficult to give any general description, since they are composed of Jats, Goojers, Rajpoots, and Pathans, Mohammedans, Hindoos, and Sikhs being the chief religionists.

Though the British acquired possession of the Punjab in 1848, the territory directly under the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab comprises only about half of the country,



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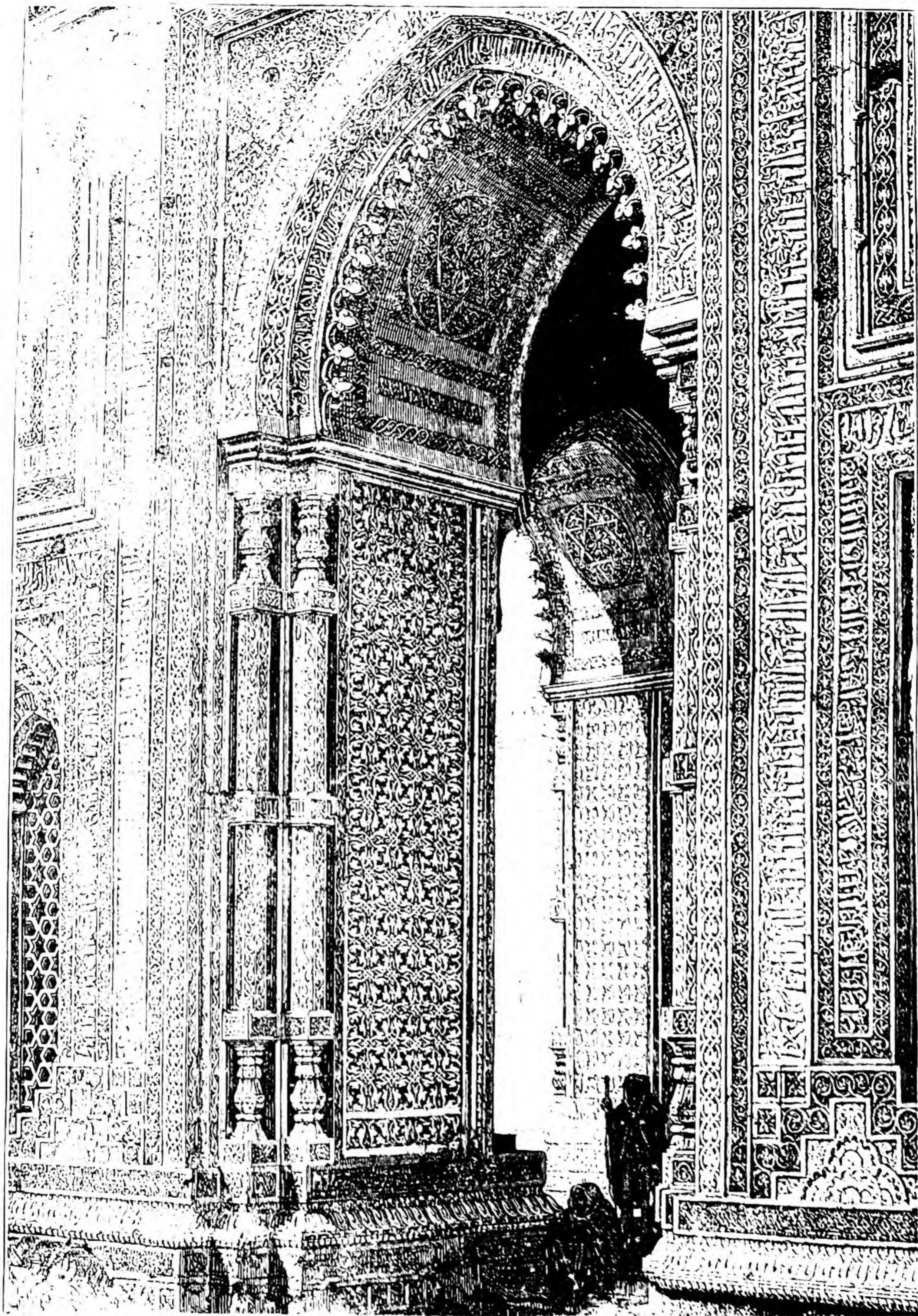
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GATE OF ALA-UD-DEEN KOTLA, NEAR DELHI.

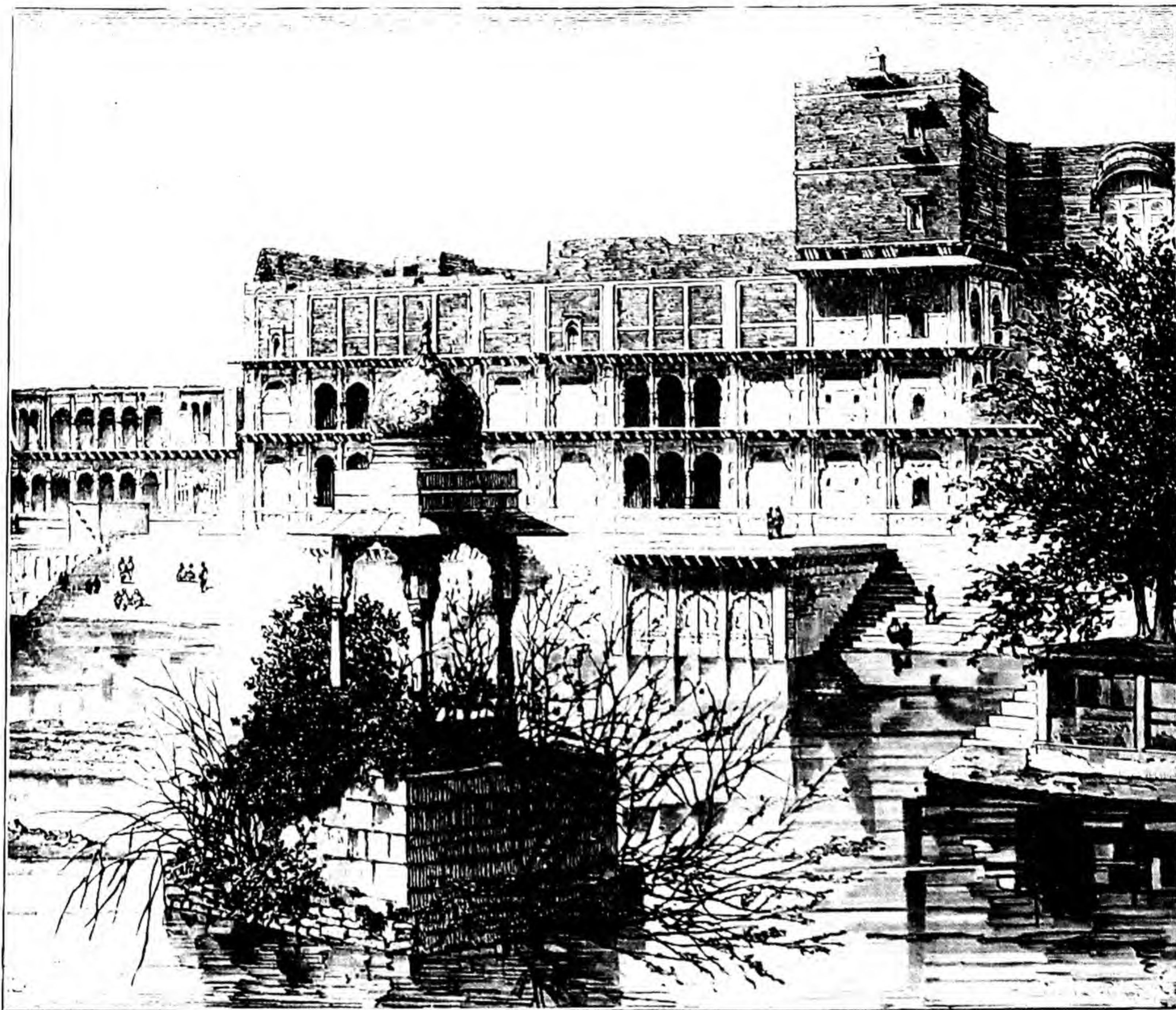


or a region nearly as large as the kingdom of Italy. The rest of it is divided up among thirty-four feudatory native States, having amongst them about 1,000,000 people, a revenue of £1,600,000, and armies the exact size of which it is difficult to exactly fix, since these wily princelings have a trick of passing their people through the army, while their standing force is always strictly within the prescribed bounds. It is, however, affirmed that they could call out 50,000 men were they of a mind to do so. But this is a most unlikely contingency, for an Indian chieftain usually loves his neighbour with so scant an affection that in this unbrotherly kindness the conquerors find their safety. In addition to these civilised—or semi-civilised—feudatories, the British Government receives a *quasi* allegiance from a number of frontier tribes whose clans are rarely at peace with each other. Altogether they do not number much over 130,000 men out of the 19,000,000 which the Punjab contains. The Sikhs waged two wars with the English in India. The last was 1848-49, and resulted in the final effacement of that warlike people as a separate nation. Since 1839 the country had been the scene of rapine and anarchy. Several members of the royal family were murdered, and the sirdars had placed on the throne of Runjeet Singh a child named Duleep Singh, who was believed to be his last descendant. The warlike sirdars were, however, anxious to try their strength with the British. Their army was numerous and well disciplined, and their artillery not inferior to that of any forces which could be brought against them. They, however, mistook their power, and the end of it was that the Punjab was annexed, and the King pensioned off. After that date the Maharajah Duleep Singh made his home in Norfolk, leading the life of an English gentleman, and doubtless passing an existence more peaceable than he could have expected among his turbulent nobles. Dissatisfied, however, with his treatment, the Maharajah left British soil in 1886, and from his retreat in Russia fulminates occasional rhodomontades against England. Under English rule the remembrance of the old wars is dying out, and the people are beginning to appreciate a government under which they can obtain some security for not having their throats cut between sunrise and sunset.

Among the districts into which the Punjab is divided for administrative purposes the most interesting historically is that of Delhi. The Commissionership comprises the districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, and Karnal, a total area of 5,557 square miles, with a population of over 2,000,000. The country for the most part consists of stony desert or hard sandy soil, where no cultivation can be carried on except by the aid of irrigation, supplied from canals, the Jumna River, and some mountain streams. The exceptions to the rule are supplied by the low-lying alluvial tract in the north, and a fringe of fertile soil on the banks of the Jumna to the south of the city of Delhi. In Delhi for two centuries the Mogul Emperors reigned, and here in 1858 the last trace of the nominal authority of the successors of Aurungzebe was effaced by the hands of the incensed English, whose kindness in rescuing his father from the tutelage of the Mahrattas he had so ill repaid. The city contains some fine buildings, and even in the native town most of the houses are of brick, well built and substantial; but the smaller streets, like most of the ways in Eastern towns, are narrow and tortuous, and frequently end in *cul-de-sacs*. The main thoroughfares are, however, broad, spacious, and well lighted, drained, and metalled, while the remains of the palace, the Residency, the mosques, the Government College, and



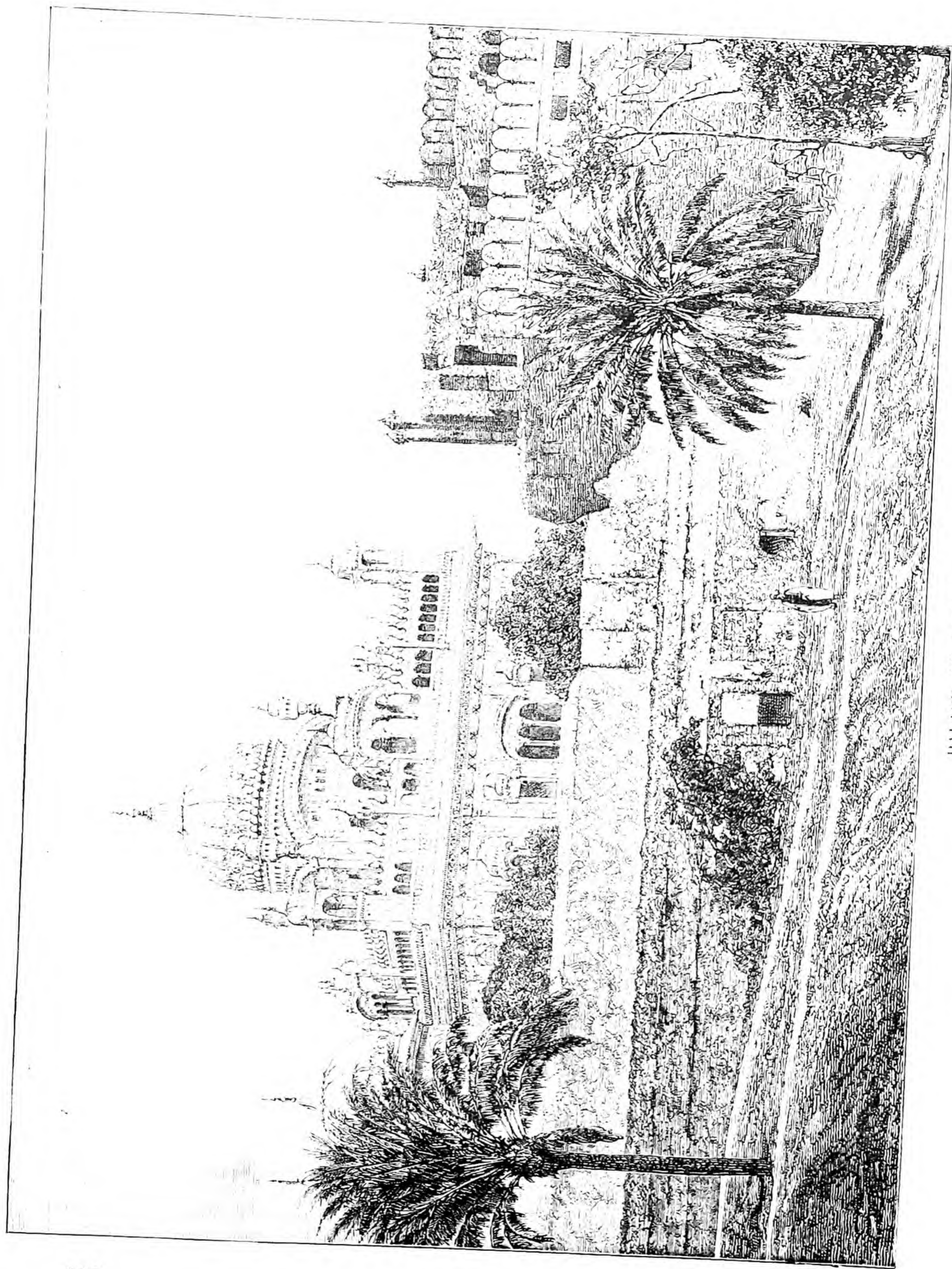
the Protestant Church are worthy of any city in the East or West. The tombs of the imperial family contain some very beautiful structures, but the palaces of the nobles which in former times gave Delhi an imperial air have for the most part given way to structures of less architectural pretensions. The history of Delhi is the history of a great part of India, and the importance of its site in the eyes of successive conquerors and kings is proved by the ruins of successive cities which strike the eye of the



TEMPLE AT MUCHKOUNDA, NEAR DHOLIPORE.

traveller long before the red sandstone walls and bastions of the present city come in sight. In rapid succession it has witnessed great prosperity and abject poverty, magnificence such as the East only conceives of, and misery such as unhappily the East is even yet only too familiar with. Under one conqueror its streets were piled with dead, slain in the mad lust for slaughter which had seized the brutal victor; in another age its population had almost deserted it to gratify the whim of a monarch who conceived the idea of immortalising himself by transferring the seat of government elsewhere. "Peace and bloodshed, greatness and humiliation, good government and fearful tyranny" have been its lot since the day when it rose on the decay of, or evolved





PALACE AT LAHORE.



itself out of, the old Aryan city of Indrapastha to the period when Nicholson recaptured it from the mutineers, and inaugurated for it under British protection a new era of peace and prosperity. It is now a busy commercial city and a great railway centre. The lines which start from it in all directions carry into its bazaars the products of many districts. At the date of the last census the city contained, including the suburbs, a population of 173,393, the greater number of whom were Hindoos, thus reversing the condition of things which existed in former days. At one time Delhi was the principal Mohammedan town, but after the mutiny the entire native population were expelled from it, and though the Hindoos were afterwards admitted, the Moslems were for long rigidly excluded. This edict seems to have frightened many of them away from the city, and doubtless of those who were present within its walls during the fearful days of the mutiny, when it was garrisoned by from 50,000 to 70,000 rebels, there are many still living who know that if their misdeeds were revealed Delhi might of all cities in India be the least safe abiding place for them. But the imperial magnificence of Delhi has not even yet departed. Here in 1876 the Prince of Wales received a royal reception, and in this ancient city of kings and emperors the Queen was, on the 1st of January, 1877, proclaimed Empress of India, in succession to the "Great Mogul."\*

Amritsir is the centre of a division and district which consists of a nearly level plain, with a slight slope to the west, and yielding abundant crops of the Punjab products. The city forms the great trading centre of the country, and in addition is a noted seat of Sikh learning and religion. The sacred tank which was constructed in 1581 is a favourite place of pilgrimage with the devotees of the faith. The town itself is populous, the number of inhabitants being over 153,000, but the streets are narrow, and the houses possess little architectural merits over those of any other town of Hindostan, unless, indeed, the great fortress of Govindargh is to be considered an exception. This huge structure was erected by Runjeet Singh in 1809, ostensibly to protect the pilgrims visiting the place, but in reality to overawe the vast and tumultuous assemblage.† Shawls in imitation of those of Kashmir, and silks, are among the industries of the place, but Indian banking also concentrates in the town, and in Amritsir a visitor would have no difficulty in obtaining a quaint "hundi," or letter of credit, on almost any town in Asia. To Amritsir also come Manchester goods, and from it grain and its local manufactures are sent to other parts of Hindostan and to Europe.

Lahore, thirty-six miles east from Amritsir, though accounted the most important town of the Punjab, is less populous than its commercial rival, though, owing to the city being frequently the residence of the Governor-General (p. 217) and the seat of a university, it has rapidly advanced in wealth and prosperity. At present its population numbers about 150,000, but under the Moguls it is reported to have been a busy hive of upwards of 1,000,000 souls. Though the streets of the modern town are narrow and

\* See Mr. Val. Prinsep's "Imperial India" (1879), and the letters descriptive of the Prince of Wales's tour, published in the *Times*, *Standard*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Daily News* (or collected into volumes), by Messrs. W. H. Russell, George Henty, J. Drew Gay, and Archibald Forbes. For Oudh see also Irwin: "The Garden of India" (1880).

† Thornton: "Indian Gazetteer" (1862).



mean, the city bears many evidences of its former splendour. The brick walls and extensive fortifications which surround it tell a tale of covetousness on the part of its turbulent neighbours, troublous times, and long sieges. The numerous wells inside the walls point to the necessity of the city being well provided for resisting an enemy; the fine gardens bespeak ease, wealth, and luxury, and there is scarcely a road of the city but is strewn with the ruins of magnificent buildings dating from the earlier days of Lahore prosperity. Up to 1799 Lahore was still a city of consequence, but in that year Runjeet Singh—who is buried here\*—transferred his capital to Amritsir, and with this change the place began to decay, and continued its decadence until the British conquest of the Punjab once more gave it the fillip which is at present animating it again.

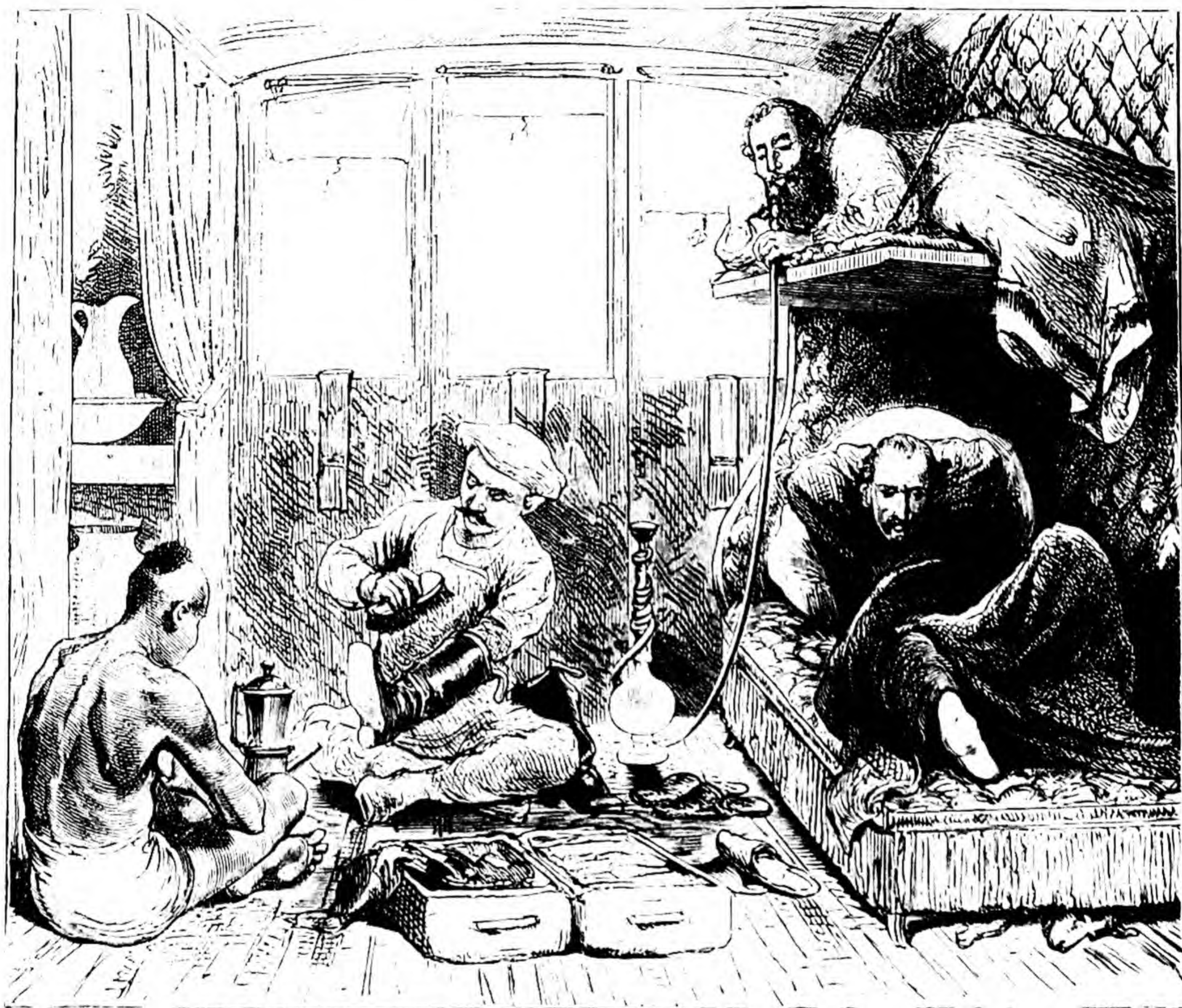
Mooltan—200 miles south-west of Lahore—is another ancient city of the Punjab, but is a mere shadow of its former self. It is, indeed, only the remnant of four cities, but abounds in mosques, tombs, and shrines, which attest its quondam magnificence. Yet under the British rule Mooltan is again rising rapidly. Its bazaars are thronged, its looms busy, and its merchants and bankers proverbially wealthy. The neighbouring country is fertile, and as the city is now in the circuit of the Punjab railways, and connected with Hyderabad, 570 miles distant, by a line of steamers, a large and increasing traffic is opening up between it, Kurrachee, and other ports and inland towns. It has a population of about 70,000. These are the chief cities of the Punjab, but Goojerat, where was fought the last battle in the Sikh War, Rawul Pindi, Attock, Bhawulpoor, and Peshawur are all towns of some importance. Peshawur is, indeed, a fortress and city of great military value, owing to its proximity to the frontier of Afghanistan. The province of which it is the capital was up to a late period part of the Ameer of Cabul's territory. It was originally built by Akbar, but it afterwards fell into the hands of the Afghans. From their grasp it was wrenched by Runjeet Singh, with whose kingdom it descended to us (p. 215). When the city fell into the hands of the Sikhs it possessed 100,000 inhabitants, but nowadays its population, though increasing under the British rule, does not number over 85,000. As a trading place for the frontier tribesmen it is of some importance, but as a garrison town and fortress it is chiefly important to the Punjab. Even this distinction will be partially lost to it since the frontier has been pushed further into Afghanistan, though at the same time what it loses in military prestige it will gain in trade with the hillmen, whose capital it will become.

The Punjab has great capabilities, and as the country gets thoroughly settled down to that industrious life which wars and the ever-present fear of depredation precluded, it may before long be one of the wealthiest of the Indian Governments. Within its boundary there is, however, much waste land. The duabs, or doabs—that is, regions between the rivers—are not all fertile. The good land is, indeed, mainly confined to a strip on the banks of either river, the intervening territory being a "bâr," or waste, varying from forty or fifty miles at the base to a few miles at the point where it approaches the junction of the two rivers. In early days these doabs were left to the nomadic breeders of cattle, camels, &c., for though remote from the river irrigation, and sparsely populated

\* He was generally known as the "Lion of Lahore," or the "Lion of the Punjab."



owing to the great depth at which water could be found, plenty of fodder in the shape of small trees and prickly shrubs are scattered over them, and in favourable rainy seasons fine crops of grass spring up. But in addition to the camel breeders, the bārs afforded safe refuge for the cattle-stealers, who subsisted by pouncing on the herds belonging to the villagers in the fertile lands of the adjoining doab, and driving their plunder off into the wilderness, where, before the luckless owners were aware of their loss, they were



RAILWAY TRAVELLING IN INDIA.

almost beyond the reach of recovery by force, while the bār was a land into which the king's writ ran not. For long—even under our administration—no effort was made to check these depredations. But of late years the increase of cultivation and the growth of population are gradually circumscribing these wastes, and in time the bārs will get so limited in extent that the robbers who still haunt them will find it to their profit either to take to a comparatively honest life, or seek a region further removed from jails, policemen, the gallows, and other handmaids of good government. The inhabitants of the bārs lived after a rude and uncouth fashion. The produce of their herds supplied them with the bulk of their food; wheat or maize flour was a luxury, for their ordinary bread consisted



of the bruised seeds of a jungle grass, which, though not disagreeable to the taste, was only slightly nutritious. A rainy season was looked forward to as a wonderful stroke of luck. Then grass was abundant, and water for themselves and cattle was found in the shallow pools. But in ordinary years the nomads had to dig a well at each encampment, and as the water was not usually found at a less depth than eighty or ninety feet, this was always a laborious and often a dangerous task. Nor were the inhabitants of the *bâr* free from other anxieties. The law, it is true, did not often lay its hand on the offenders, who found a refuge in these wilds. But the professors of "*khôj*," or tracking, were always on the alert to follow up the trail of stolen stock. These trackers were professional gentlemen, whose talent was inherited, for like every other calling in India, that of "*khôj*" descended from father to son. One of these adepts was in former times usually attached to each police-station, and when outraged villagers made complaints of their cattle being stolen, the tracker was sent on the trail of the thieves. How keenly they followed this up, and with what skill they would make the most trifling circumstance subserve their purposes, are the theme of many an old Indian's tale. No North American Indian—not even the mythical personage of the novel—could perform this task more adroitly, and, it may be added, no trackers had ever more wily thieves to track. The inhabitants of the *bâr* were quite familiar with the skill of those who were set to find them out, and when they put their wits in action to elude the trailer, the contest was akin to that in which diamond is set to cut diamond, or Greek to cheat Greek. "Running water leaves no trail," and accordingly the rivers of either side of the *doab* were freely made use of whenever available. The dry soil of the *bâr*, however, left the mark of the cattle's hoofs, and to avoid these they were shod with leather bags, tied round the fetlock, which prevented the hoofs from scratching the hard surface. "The law of the *khôj*," as a writer on the Punjab explains, was, "that on the '*khôji*,' or tracker, bringing the train of stolen animals to a village, the headmen of the township are bound to show that the tracks proceed beyond their limits, or, failing to produce the thief, to make good the value of the stolen cattle. This practice bears some analogy to the ordeal by which the Israelites were to free themselves from the charge of blood shed within the limits of their village (Deut. xxi. 1). The system has its drawbacks, the principal being that the right enforcement of it depends on the honesty of the tracker, a somewhat insecure foundation to build upon. It rests with him to declare whether the track has been brought home to a village or not, and it depends on the value and cogency of the arguments adduced by the villagers as to whether he can discover it on the other side, and so liberate them from responsibility."\*

#### THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

Prior to 1861 these provinces formed part of the Governments of Madras and the North-Western Provinces; but since the railway running between Bombay and Calcutta has cut through them, these hitherto almost undeveloped—and to most Europeans in India

\* "The Punjab and the North-West Frontier of India," by An Old Punjabee (1878), pp. 2-5.



almost unknown—countries have assumed great commercial importance. From the Central Provinces cotton is now sent in large quantities to Europe; and, indeed, through the city of Jubbulpore more traffic is said to pass than through any Indian town, Bombay excepted. The Provinces are governed by a Chief Commissioner, and comprise an area of 84,445 square miles, peopled by about 10,000,000 people, of very diverse origins. The country has an equally varied soil and surface—table-land, river-valleys, and forest. “Within comparatively narrow limits a plateau and a plain follow each other, and again in similar sequence a larger plateau and a larger plain, ending in a mass of hill and forest, which is probably the wildest part of the whole Indian Peninsula,” are the words in which the compiler of the official account of the Provinces sums up their physical geography. It may be added that the plateaux are broken up by isolated peaks and “straggling hill ranges,” and that the rivers which flow through them are, owing to the rugged character of the ground in many cases, more of the nature of mountain-torrents than of the placid floods with which we are familiar in the plains of India. The scenery in sublimity cannot compare with that of the Himalaya, but it is pleasing and varied when compared with the monotony of the plains of Hindostan. In no other part of India is there such a variety of soils, or such sudden transitions from the most fertile land to another tract which is barren to the extent of utter unproductiveness. In the pleasant winter months the traveller will pass through a region green with waving crops of corn; and while he is admiring the wonderful fertility and beauty of the country he will suddenly come upon a strip of desert land, or on belts of gravel studded with noble trees. On the Satpura plateau fine deposits of black soil may be often seen in the hollow of the green rolling basalt, surrounded on every side by regions uncultivated and unculturable. These valley-oases are often tilled like gardens, and laden with such crops of opium poppies and sugar-cane that were it not for their inaccessibility they would tempt away the best ryots of the plains. Tea, coffee, and other delicate plants, it is thought, might be raised in these upland regions; but as yet the obstacles in the way of these experiments proving successful are so many that the plateaux are as yet sparsely peopled compared with the less healthy but more easily reached country at their base. Railways and roads are, however, opening up the Central Provinces, and the recently discovered coal-fields and iron-beds promise to give new life to the wheat, rice, and cotton growers, and to the herdsmen, for whose cattle there is, owing to the great number of the inhabitants being Hindoos, little home market. In addition to the region directly under British rule, there are in the Central Provinces fifteen small feudatory States, with a population of 1,060,000 souls, the greater number Hindoos and aborigines of various tribes. The Central Provinces comprise the old Sagur and Nerbudda districts, the lapsed Mahratta state of Nagpore, and portion of Bundelkhand. The latter country is peopled by Hindoo tribes, and, in addition to the part under the British Crown, contains a cluster of petty native States, some of whom remained staunchly loyal to us during the Mutiny. Jubbulpore, Sagur, Nagpore, and Raipore may be mentioned among the towns of the Central Provinces. Some of them are of importance, and the first we have already noticed as a great commercial *entrepôt* for the cotton and other crops of the country; but Nagpore, a large trading-place celebrated for its cloths, is the capital, and the residence of the Chief Commissioner. It has a population of 100,000.



*Burmah* has already been fully described (pp. 123—126), but its close neighbour is daily becoming of greater importance. This is the province of *Assam*, which was in 1825 ceded by *Burmah*, and in 1874 formed into a Government distinct from that of Bengal, of which up to that date it formed a part.

### ASSAM.

This is an outlying province, comparatively thinly peopled, and as yet but little developed, and consequently yielding but a trifling revenue compared with some of the older Governments of India. The last census gave 4,881,426 souls as its population; and as the area of the country is 46,341 square miles, the number of inhabitants to the square mile cannot be much more than 100, while in some of the more densely peopled parts of Bengal from 500 to 573 persons crowd the same space.

Assam Sir W. Hunter has characterised as a series of fertile valleys, through which flow the Brahmapootra (p. 187), and the sixty-one smaller streams which swell its flood, after it has entered British territory from its source in the Tibetan plateau. It enters Assam by a series of waterfalls and rapids, "amid vast boulders and accumulations of rock," and the gorge through which its southern branch makes its appearance into the Lakhimpore District has been long a favourite place of pilgrimage for pious Hindoos. In its course through Assam the river will often during the rainy season flood extensive districts, and in its course several islands have been formed. It finally passes into Bengal; and after spreading itself out over the alluvial districts, and changing its name several times, it ends its course of 1,800 miles in the Bay of Bengal, close by the place where the still more celebrated Ganges pours its sacred waters into the same sea. The upper part of the great Assam Valley is "varied and picturesque, walled in on the north and east by the Himalayas, and thickly wooded from the base to the snow-line. On either bank of the Brahmapootra a long narrow strip of plain rises almost imperceptibly to the foot of the hills. Gigantic reeds and grasses occupy the lowlands near the banks of the great river; expanses of rice-land come next; a little higher up, dotted with villages encircled by groves of bamboos and fruit-trees of great size and beauty, the dark forests succeed, covering the interior table-land and mountains. The country in the vicinity of the large rivers is flat, and impenetrable from dense jungle, with the exception of some very low-lying tracts, which are either permanent marshes or are covered with water during the rains. Jungle will not grow in such depressions, and they are covered either with water, reeds, high grasses, or rice-cultivation. On or near such open spaces are collected all the villages. As the traveller proceeds further down the valley the country gradually opens out into wide plains. In the western district of Kamrup the country forms one great expanse, with a few elevated tracts here and there, varying from 200 to 800 feet in height."

The soil of Assam is for the most part black loam, and there are few parts of the country which cannot be cultivated. The hills form the *locale* of some of the most flourishing tea-plantations, the valleys out of reach of the ordinary floods are favourite haunts of the native cultivators, and the delta, or low lands liable to be overspread by the rising of



the Brahmapootra, attract at certain seasons great herds of elephants and buffaloes, as well as human inhabitants. Rice is the crop which covers most of the cultivated land, but



GUADAMA, THE LAST BUDDHA.

it is used entirely within the Province. Tea is, however, largely exported, though the plant was only discovered to be native to the country as late as 1823, and the first twelve chests of the product of the young plantations were received in England fifteen years



later. In 1870 there were 116 "gardens" open, 54,326 labourers employed monthly, and nearly 12,000,000 pounds of tea manufactured. Since that date the production has gone on steadily increasing, so that at the present time the value of the "gardens" must be largely enhanced. Indeed, in 1886, £4,306,133 worth of tea was *exported* from India, though it must be remembered that a great part of this comes from various other plantations besides those of Assam. In 1887 the yield of the Indian tea-gardens continued to advance, being worth fully five millions of pounds; the rate of increase, in spite of bad seasons, was thus very rapid. Formerly the increased tea-consumption of England was shared both by China and India. In 1879, for the first time the consumption of China tea was stationary, the whole increase going to the credit of India. We may state, while the subject is being touched on, that tea is grown not only in Assam proper, but in the recently annexed districts of Cachar, Sylhet, Kangra, Dehra Doon, Chittagong, Darjeeling, the Neilgherries, and Chota Nagpore, in the Central Provinces. In Assam alone 200,000 coolies are at work. These labourers have mostly emigrated from their own districts to the tea-country, and in the course of a few years save a little money and return home with enhanced ideas of their position in the social scale. They thus become missionaries of social civilisation to their villages, and teach the indolent masses of India that steady industry is, after all, the best way to independence, and that labour, if troublesome at the time, is productive of rupees and the dignity which the possession of the Sahib's coin always imparts.

A writer on the Indian tea-gardens mentions that most of those employed in the Darjeeling gardens are Nepaulese, the Lepeches, or aborigines of Sikkim, not caring for labour of this kind, nor, indeed, for continuous work of any description. Some of the plantations are on the hills at elevations of from 1,000 to 6,000 feet, and others in the Terai, along the foot of the hills, at from 400 to 800 feet above the sea. The Terai, as already observed (p. 181), is a most malarious region, where in former times few Europeans, or even natives, dared at certain seasons to pass a night. Though the clearings for tea-plantations—the soil being superior to that of the hills—have improved its salubrity, yet the mortality through the region is still appalling.\*

Tea and rice are, however, only part of the crops of Assam, for maize, pulses, oil-seeds, sugar-cane, hemp, jute, rhea-grass, mulberries, potatoes, and other crops are grown; and on the whole the Assam peasant leads a pleasant life, as life goes in

TEA-PLANT (*Thea viridis*).



those parts of the world. His climate is good—for the East—the soil of his country is, as a rule, fertile, and it is in no part over-populated. Indeed, most parts of the province could support ten times the present population, and the amount of surplus land capable of cultivation is immense. The result is, however, not altogether favourable. The Assamese is indolent, easy, good-natured, and not in every case as prosperous as under more adverse circumstances he would in all likelihood have been, or as, with his advantages, he might be. But a poor Assamese is not allowed to come on the public. He is taken care of by his relatives, for the natives are kind to their parents and offspring and hospitable to people of their own caste. The ruling class of the country evidently came across the Himalayas or from Burmah, but for ages a stream of immigration has also been pouring in from Bengal. Hence one of the most numerous tribes is that of the Nadiyals, or Doms, who are originally from the Delta, where they at present constitute one of the outcast communities of Hindooism, though in Assam they affect great strictness in eating and drinking, and follow the religious teachings of the Kalitas, or ancient priests of the Ahams. There are, however, numerous other frontier tribes—Nagas, Singphos, Daphlas, Miris, Khamptis, Matakas, Abars, &c. The Nagas, with whom of late years the frontier troops have had various petty wars, are said to number between seventy and eighty thousand souls, but the separate tribes are independent of each other, and their power is minimised by the fact that the individual sects hate each other much worse than they hate the English, who have obtruded themselves into their hills. The Singphos were in early days even more troublesome than the Nagas, but of late years they have settled down to agriculture; and though the English Government have no very settled relations with them, in a general way they recognise its supremacy, and are by no means uncomfortable neighbours to the tea-planters. Assam has, indeed, no mean future before it. “With its vast forests,” writes Sir W. Hunter, “its inexhaustible rice-grounds, its coal, iron, and tea, and the cheap means of transit which its rivers afford, Assam, though at present one of the most backward among the Indian provinces, has capabilities of development such as no other part of Bengal possesses.” \*

#### MADRAS.

The Presidency of Madras may be said to roughly embrace the maritime plains in the neighbourhood of the southern promontory of India from Ganjam, south of Cuttack, and from the delta of the Mahanadi to the Malabar coast—comprising in all 139,000 square miles under the direct English rule, and 9,818 of tributary States, with an entire population of nearly 35,000,000, or about the same number as Great Britain and Ireland. Madras, though not so large or populous as the Presidency of Bengal, under which the political divisions already named come, is the second of the great provinces of India. Yet it is by no means valuable in proportion to its size and

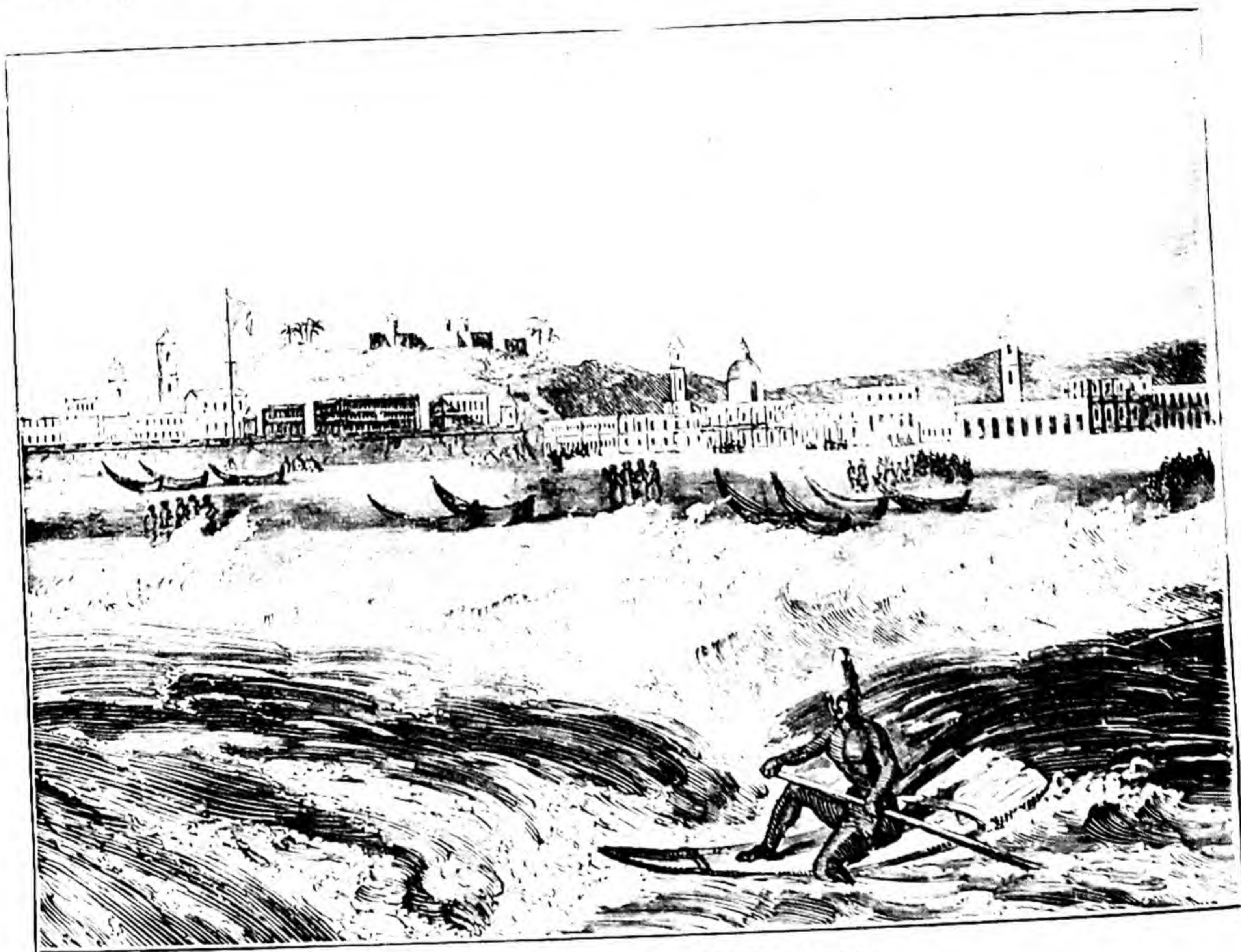
\* Robinson: “Description of Assam” (1841); Hunter: “A Statistical Account of Assam” (1879); and “Imperial Gazetteer of India,” etc.



population, for though it possesses a coast-line of 1,730 miles, it does not boast of one good natural harbour. In the early days of the British rule Madras was historically an important region, for here was fought out that duel which for ever decided whether the French or English were to be masters of India. Pondicherry, ninety miles south of the city of Madras, is now the principal French settlement, and is mainly important in so far that it remains a monument of what might have been. However, up to 1801, though Clive had won Bengal, Madras was small in extent. In that year, however, the addition of the Carnatic to it raised the Presidency almost to its present dimensions. Its physical characteristics may be described in general terms as consisting of plains and forest, with few prominent eminences, though the different districts of which it consists vary considerably in these respects. In the north are the provinces of Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Rajahmundry, and Masulipatam; in the centre Nellore, Guntore, Chingleput, and Arcot; while the southern division of the Presidency is considered to consist of Salem, Coimbatore, Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura, Tinnevely, Cochin, and Travancore. In addition there is the Mysore division, which includes Mysore, Malabar, and Canara, and the ceded districts of Bellary, Kadapa, and Karnul, besides Nagpore and the Nizam's territory, which is partially under the control of Madras. The city of Madras contains over half a million of people, and though a considerable portion of the space is occupied by gardens—or "compounds," as they are universally known in India—the area occupies fully four miles by two and a quarter. The chief buildings face the sea, but during the hot season the temperature is very high, though modified by a pleasant sea-breeze, gratefully known to the residents as "the doctor." The city is a great centre of commerce, and in railway communication with all the main lines of India, but is singularly unfortunate in respect to its harbour—or rather, want of harbour. Three feet from the shore, the surf bursts into a long line of breakers, which thunder for miles along the coast (p. 228). Even in calm weather these waves are formidable littoral barriers, but during storms the breakers extend more than three times the ordinary distance from the shore, and rise to the height of fourteen feet. At no time can European ships pass this wall of surf, though the Mussula boats and catamarans of the country ride through it on ordinary occasions with impunity, though when the north-east monsoon blows even they are sometimes lost in endeavouring to keep up communication between the town and the ships in the roadstead. Even the latter is open to every wind that blows, except the west, and in case a sudden gale springs up vessels at anchor are obliged to run in all haste for the open sea. When to these disadvantages there are added the facts that the city is not built on a navigable river, and possesses in the neighbouring country a soil but moderately fertile, the difficulties under which Madras labours may be appreciated. Yet in spite of these impediments the city does a considerable amount of foreign trade, chiefly in rice, hides, skins, and above all in coffee, and when the long-mooted scheme of a close harbour protected by breakwaters becomes a reality, then we may expect it to contest the commercial supremacy of Calcutta and Bombay. Vizagapatam and Masulipatam are places of some commercial importance, as are also Cuddalore, Tranquebar, Negapatam, and Tuticorin, to the south of Madras, on the Coromandel coast and the Gulf of Manaar; Trivandrum, Cochin, Calicut, Cananore, Beypore, and Mangalore, on the Malabar coast; Vellore, on the Palar;



Tanjore and Trichinopoly on the Canvery; Madura, Tinnevely, and Arcot are among the other notable towns. Arcot was, indeed, the ancient capital of the Carnatic, and is memorable in history as the locality of Clive's famous victory of 1751. Vellore was the scene of the mutiny of two native regiments in 1806; Tranquebar was originally a Danish town; Madura is famous for its pagodas; Tinnevely is equally celebrated for its pearl-oysters and its native Christians; Tanjore for its religious edifices, silks, and muslins; and Trichinopoly carries on a considerable trade in gold filagree work, cheroots, and cutlery. But these, like most of the smaller towns of the Presidency, are still



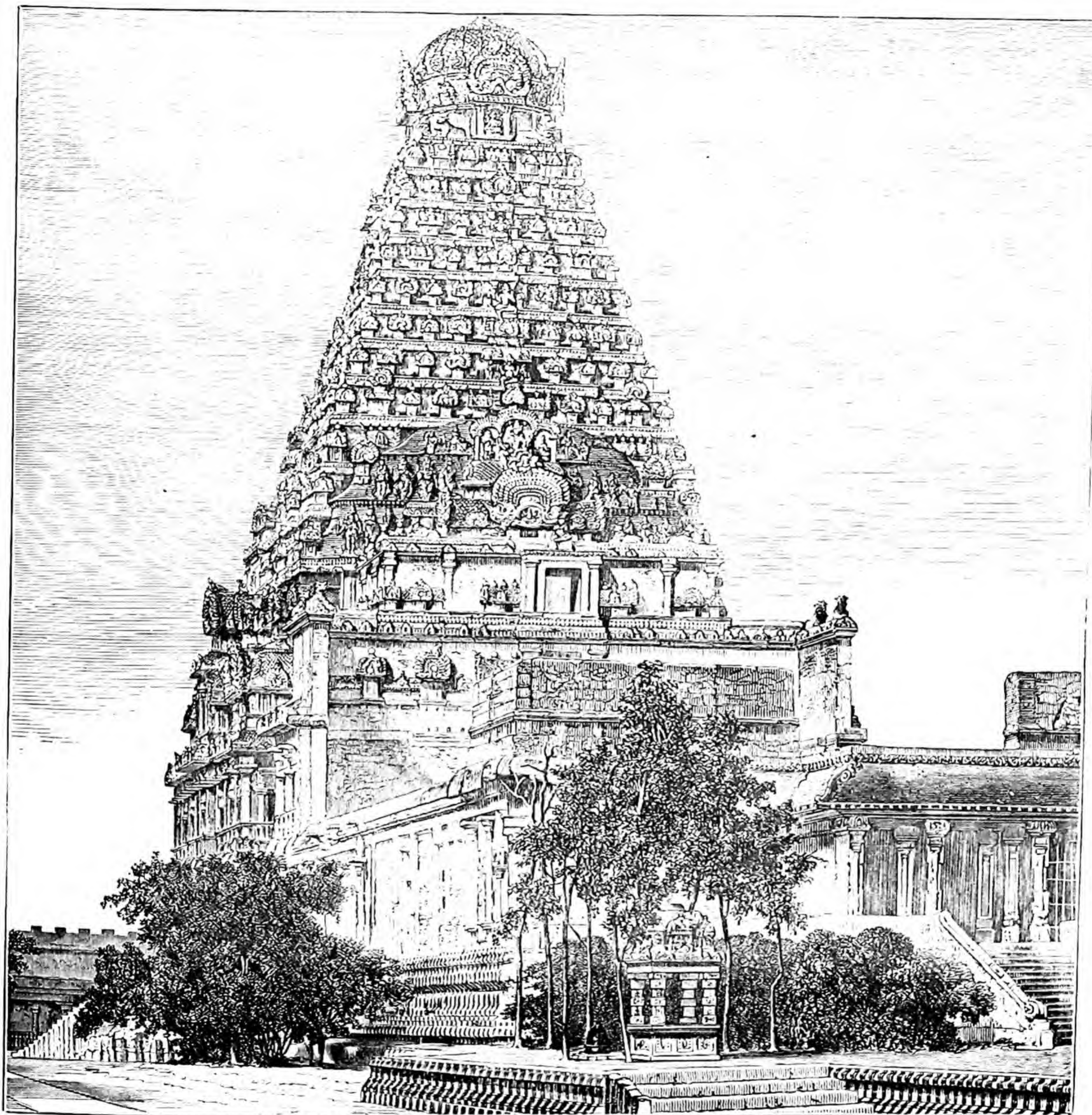
CATAMARAN IN THE SURF BEFORE MADRAS.

to a great extent more native than foreign, and are little altered by the great changes which have come over India within the last century. Agriculture in Madras is not at a high stage.\* It suffers more from the unequal distribution of the rainfall than from an actual deficiency. It is common experience for the country to suffer from drought and flood in the same month; there might be drought for twenty-nine days and a flood on the thirtieth. This necessitated the employment of storage tanks, but a large part of the country is still without them. In Madras a comparatively small area is under forest. In thirty-five years 8,000,000 acres of scrub jungle have been cleared and brought under the plough, with the result that many rivers that formerly flowed for

\* What follows is abstracted from a Lecture by Mr. W. Robertson, Superintendent of Government Farms in Madras, delivered before the Society of Arts, May 8th, 1880.



five months now flow for only three or four. The gross revenue from land is four millions. "Zemindari" estates are held subject to the payment of a fixed sum to the Government;



PAGODA AT TANJORE.

"Iran" land is held subject to a nominal quit-rent, having been granted in recognition of services to the State; but the "ryotwari" tenure is the method under which lands in this Presidency are chiefly held. Possession can be retained as long as the rent is paid; when it is not, the right of occupation can be sold to the highest bidder. The ryot can sell, lease, or mortgage his right of occupation. The rent, theoretically fixed for thirty years, is



supposed to represent half the net value of the produce. The rent settlement department of the State costs £30,000 a year, but the data on which it is worked are purely empirical. The rent charged by the State is generally low, but sub-letting leads to rack-renting. As the right of occupation can be bought and sold, the interest on the purchase-money ought to be allowed for in fixing the rent. At present the man who farms most highly pays most rent. Fully 80 per cent. of the occupied land is still unprotected by irrigation, and as an increasing population has to depend largely on the land for their food, its prices increase and the people suffer. The ryot has not a fixed holding, but changes it at pleasure, the consequence being the land is becoming exhausted, and permanent improvements are not made. The ryots of a village may not pay for more than two hundred acres, and yet in the course of years may temporarily exhaust many hundred acres. If each cultivator were obliged to keep to a given area, the exhausting character of the husbandry would render the soil unfit to yield the scanty produce obtained by the ryot. Shallow tillage prevails over the south of India. The native plough seems to do more work than it really does, for though it is light, owing to its bad shape, it has a great draught and does proportionately less work. The soil is not dressed with manures, although large quantities are available and wasted, and some of the most valuable are consumed as fuel. Measures could be taken to grow wood for fuel without lessening the food-producing area. All that is required is the proper application of labour, of which there is abundance. The cropping of the land is very exhausting, not so much from the crops grown being those that make great demands on the soil, as from nearly the whole being removed and not consumed by the stock of the farm. The ryot knows nothing about rotation in crops. Often he sows three or four kinds of crops together in order to secure one, should the others fail. The lavish use of water in irrigating land does great injury to public health, and renders the soil fit only for aquatic plants, such as the rice-plant. Although irrigation works have not paid well, the country would derive great benefit from the extension of irrigation schemes wisely planned. Wells are usually sunk at the expense of the ryots. Large tracts are well suited for growing wheat and tobacco. However, Indian, and with it Madras, agriculture has greatly improved within the last twenty-five years. The area under dry cultivation has, according to Sir William Rose Robinson, risen from twelve millions to twenty millions of acres, and the area of irrigated land has been increased by one million and a half acres, or has doubled in extent. The water rent has quadrupled, so that the State has done its duty and reaped its reward, but not without benefiting the people. The land-tax is a very heavy charge, but it has steadily diminished from 3s. to 2s. 2d. per acre for dry land. This is due partly to inferior land coming under cultivation; the assessment of wet land has steadily decreased from 14s. to 10s. an acre.

The agricultural population of India, despite fiscal burdens and famines, is improving gradually and surely. There is no serfdom in India. The land is the property of the people, who are intensely attached to the soil; but owing to various circumstances their rights as owners are curtailed, while the crushing greed of the usurer, protected—and even aided—by the process of the English law, renders the ryot's life one continual struggle with poverty, and even famine. The owners of land exercise the same rights as in England. We have simply ratified the conditions of settlement which we found existing



in India. Land passes without the intervention of the State, whether the owner is a "zemindar" (proprietor), or a "ryot" (tenant farmer), though the inequality of tenants under the State and under "zemindars" is a grievance which demands alleviation or abrogation. It is a mistake to speak of revenue tenures, as if revenue had aught to do with title. To talk of the land-tax as rent is mischievous, and the mistake is encouraging agrarian ideas, while in the opinion of most Indian publicists it would be disastrous for the State to take the place of a landlord. In case of bankruptcy the State is simply a first creditor. To talk of tenures in India as some do is almost like treating the water-rate paper in London as a title to property. However, the land-tax is a very heavy fiscal demand, amounting to one-half the net produce of the land, a proportion which in England would go a long way to arrest improvement.

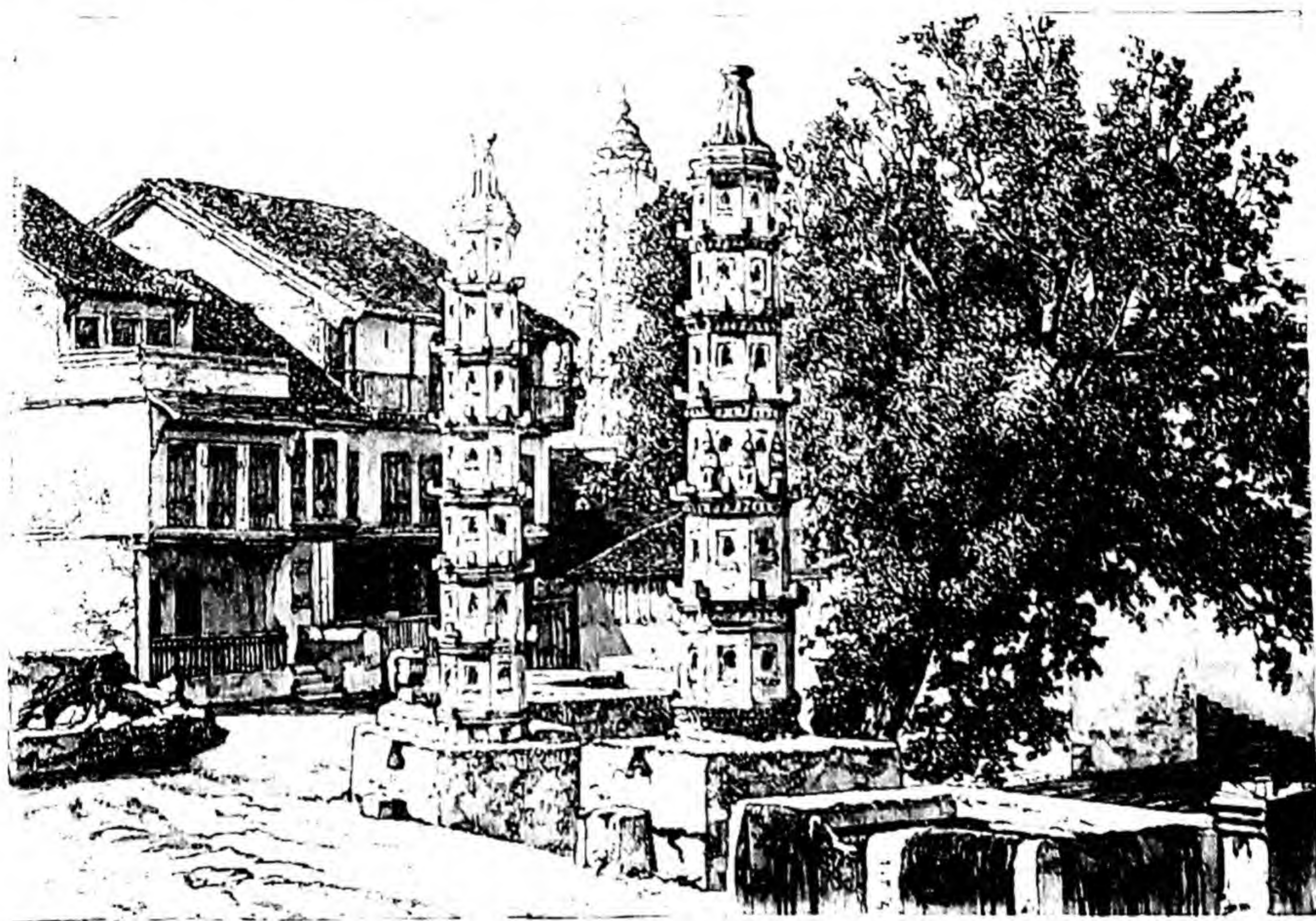
Some of the chief native States of India we shall refer to at a later period of our survey. But Mysore, since the year 1834, when Lord William Bentinck deposed the last ruler of the old Hindoo line, has been in all but name a British province. Under the tutelage of the English ruler the province has increased in prosperity. The people have become more numerous, agriculture has improved, and the revenue has increased. But in 1881 the young Maharajah Chamrajendra Wadiar Bahadur having come of age, in accordance with arrangements for some time in progress, Mysore passed at once under the thrall of its native ruler, though the change was not hailed with much satisfaction by the people of the country, who had tasted the peace and justice of European government. During the British occupation the government of the State was assimilated to that of the neighbouring Presidency, and many industries hitherto strange to Mysore were developed. Bangalore became one of the most pleasant of hill sanatoria and iron-smelting a profitable pursuit. At Bangalore and Kolar also gold-mining is pursued, and cinchona plantations have been established with good results. The planters have done much to develop the resources of the country, which, owing to its moisture and elevation over the sea level, is not nearly so hot as might have been expected from its position. Tigers and elephants abound in the wooded villages, and much of the coffee now exported from Madras is grown in the highlands of Mysore. Its population is over 5,000,000 and its revenue over £1,250,000.

#### BOMBAY.

When Charles II. married Catherine of Braganza she received as part of her dowry the island of Bombay, which was then held by the Portuguese. The "Merry Monarch" in his turn made it over to the East India Company in 1668, and under the English rule it has ever since continued. The island of Bombay is, however, but a small part of the Presidency, which in extent almost equals the German Empire. The native States occupy about one-third of it, Sindh one-fourth, and Bombay Proper the remainder of the 125,000 miles of which the Presidency consists, albeit it is much smaller than either Bengal or Madras. The length of the province is 1,050 miles, and its coast line, though for the most part regular, is broken by many fine harbours—such as Bombay, Kurrachee, and Karwar. Of the population, which numbers over 17,000,000, including the 9,000,000 of the tributary States, over 76 per cent. are Hindoos; the remainder are chiefly



Mohammedans and sectaries of various faiths, savage and civilised. The physical features of the country may be summed up briefly. Bombay Presidency consists of a long strip of land along the rock-bound shores of the Indian Ocean. The Western Ghats (p. 182) run in a parallel line with the coast, but in the north a continuation of the Suliman range (p. 188) separates British India from Beloochistan. The leading feature of Sindh, in the valley of the Indus, is the low range of sand-hills; after crossing which we come to the isolated hills of Kachh and Kattywar, and then to the rugged and mountainous country south of the Tapti, the hills of which sometimes overhang the ocean, and generally run parallel to it, at a distance nowhere exceeding fifty miles. These are the northern extremity of the Sahyadri, or Western Ghats. In the vicinity of these hills, particularly in the north, the



HINDOO PAGODA AT MALABAR HILL, NEAR BOMBAY.

country is rugged and broken, and distinguished by the presence of isolated peaks, masses of rock, and spurs, which, running eastward, form water-sheds for the great rivers of the Deccan. Sindh, Gujerat, the Concan, the Deccan, and the Carnatic are the chief level tracts. Sindh—also written Sinde or Scinde—is indeed a flat, arid land, where crops can only be reared by irrigation. Gujerat is for the most part a rich plain, and the Concan is a creek-intersected, rugged, and “difficult” country. The plains of the Deccan are traversed by great rivers, but as the rainfall is uncertain vegetation is usually blank or absent during the greater part of the year. Finally, the Carnatic, or country south of the River Krishna, consists, in Sir W. Hunter’s words, “of extensive tracts of black or cotton soil, in a high state of cultivation.” The great river of Western India is the Indus (p. 183), but the Nerbada, the Tapti, and other minor streams intersect the region we have now entered upon, and from the hill ranges at certain seasons of the year wild mountain torrents rush brawling to the sea (p. 182). The Manchar Lake, situated on the right bank of the Indus, will, during the



rainy season, sometimes cover an area estimated to contain 180 square miles; but the *Ran*, or Runn of Cutch, is the most remarkable physical feature of Western India. This depression occupies an area of 8,000 square miles, and forms the western boundary of the province of Gujerat; but whether it is an arm of the sea whence the water has receded, or a lake whose seaward barrier has been swept away, is not yet settled. It is known to have originated in an earthquake convulsion, by which a great tract of country was lowered. At all events it is, according to the season of the year, "a salt marsh, an inland lake, or an arm of the sea." In the dry season it is strewn with salt, which is collected and sold extensively throughout the Presidency; when flooded it converts the territory of the Cutch (or Kachh) into an island.

The forests of Bombay cover the hills throughout almost their entire extent, but those of the alluvial plains are confined to a comparatively small area of Sindh or close to the banks of the Indus. Mineral wealth is absent from Bombay, except in the form of building stones and the iron ore of Teagar, which, moreover, cannot be smelted on an extensive scale, owing to the absence of fuel.

Most of the Indian crops grow well in different parts of the country, and the wheat of Sindh and Gujerat is exported in large quantities to Europe. Barley is also grown in the northern parts of the country, and cotton, sorghum, bajra (*Holcus spicatus*), sugar, rice, and various pulses occupy a large acreage, though none of these are grown to anything like the extent they might be under a better system of culture and by a people more energetic. At one time cotton-weaving was extensively carried on, but since the influx of cheap Manchester manufactures this undertaking has declined to very small proportions. However, in localities the distance of which from railways has lessened foreign competition, excellent printed goods are manufactured, and in Bombay and other parts of the Presidency cotton-mills have been erected. Silk fabrics, carpets, rugs, gold and silver cloth, embroideries, pottery, brass and copper utensils, jewellers' work, &c., also occupy the attention of a considerable portion of the population. Bombay is, indeed, destined in time to be a large manufacturing region. Already the large steam-mills of the cities are turning out a class of goods which have almost driven the inferior qualities of English fabrics out of the market; and in time, as the cost of European superintendence and the importation of machinery is lessened, they will be able to render the country almost independent of English cloths. The Bombay spinners are handicapped by the cost of fuel; but, on the other hand, they are favoured by the abundance of cheap skilled labour around them, and by the fact that, now that railways and steamers bring nearly all parts of the country into rapid communication with each other, they do not require to pay heavy freights for bringing their raw material to the factories, nor to pay equally heavy taxes on the manufactured article before it can reach its purchasers.

Bombay has different climates in different parts of the country. Sindh is as dry and hot as the deserts of Africa. During the six sultriest months of the year the water of the Indus at Haidarabad reaches blood-heat, and in Upper Sindh the thermometer has been known to record 130° in the shade. The highlands of the Deccan are, on the contrary, pleasant during most part of the year, as are the Mahratta country and the hills where the Europeans seek a refuge during the "heated term"



(p. 188). But in Cutch and Gujerat the temperature is high, and in Concan, owing to the great rainfall, is even more exhausting; while in Bombay island the weather for a great part of the year is exceedingly oppressive to Europeans, even though the heat is tempered by the sea-breezes. From June to October, except in Sindh, where the south-west monsoon exerts little influence, travelling, owing to the volumes of rain which accompany that wind, is difficult and unpleasant.

Bombay island and town is, however, infinitely the most important part of the Presidency, albeit the territory now comprised in it formed in earlier times several distinct Hindoo kingdoms. The city of Bombay—that is, *Bom Bahea*, the Portuguese for “good port”—is the most important outlet of Western India, and the great emporium of its trade with the outside world. The system of railways pours into it the trade of the north, the valley of the Ganges, the Central Provinces, and Madras, though the island on which it is situated is not over twenty-two square miles in area. In reality, however, as it is now connected with the mainland by the railway causeways, the term “island” is no longer applicable to the plain enclosed by two parallel lines of hills on which the city is built. When first it passed into the hands of England it was considered but a poor dowry to come with a princess; but before long it rose to be one of the chief Indian settlements, a position it still keeps, in spite of some reverses which it has sustained. Bombay has no great navigable rivers flowing past its wharves, as has Calcutta, which may be said to be the *entrepôt* for both the Ganges and the Brahmapootra. Neither is it, like the capital of Bengal, the outlet for a variety of crops, cotton, grain, and opium being its chief exports. Yet it is rapidly becoming the chief commercial city of India, and has already a population of 775,000, whose home is east amid a pleasant panorama of sea, mountain, and islets, the approach to Bombay from the ocean being one of the many bits of scenery which have been compared to the Bay of Naples. The streets of the city are unusually well built, and some of the European hotels and commercial buildings are of a size quite unusual for India. The native bazaars are also fine buildings; and though the dwellings of the Europeans, which lie at a distance from the native and commercial quarters, are not so imposing as those of Calcutta, some of the residences, especially those on Malabar Hill (p. 232), are sumptuous homes, and so far as picturesque surroundings and position are concerned, may hold their own with those in similar suburbs in any town of Hindostan. They are, as is usual in India, each surrounded with a “compound,” and are well suited to the climate of the country and the habits of the people. Among the most enterprising citizens are the Parsees (p. 236), the remnant of the ancient fire-worshippers of Persia who fled here in early times. They are the chief bankers, merchants, and shipbuilders, and in loyalty and public spirit yield to no class of the community, native or foreign. No other city in India—this is, I believe, generally conceded, in spite of the lively rivalry which prevails among the different Presidencies and Provinces—approaches Bombay in culture and social progress. Its enterprise is also great, and its prosperity equal to its efforts to attain it. Its water-supply is brought from Vehar, fourteen miles distant, and is abundant and good. Six miles from the city are the Caves of Elephanta, which, though now in decay, are still wonderful specimens of the skill and patience of the old Buddhist and Jain architects, who hewed them out of the



solid rock. In the neighbouring isle of Salsette are the cave-temples of Kanhari (pp. 237, 241), which, though worth a visit, are, however, unequal in grandeur to those at Karli, on the road to Poonah. This city, seventy-four miles south-eastward from Bombay, was in earlier days the capital of the Mahratta Peishwas. It is, however, now fallen into decay, though it still contains 130,000 inhabitants, and is the military head-quarters of Western India, its position—1,800 feet above the sea—rendering it more healthy than Bombay or any of the coast-lying towns. Nassick, a sacred place of the Hindoos, Surat, where was established the first English factory in the Mogul's dominions, and Ahmedabad, an ancient walled city, may be noted as other towns of Bombay possessing much interest. But Haidarabad, near the head of the delta of the Indus, Kurrachee, the chief port of the same province, almost at the western extremity of India, and to a lesser degree Shikarpore—though Kurrachee has to a great extent eclipsed it—are the most important places commercially in the valley of the Indus, while Meerut, Jacobabad, and Dudur are all of more or less interest. Haiderabad—not to be confounded with Hyderabad, the Nizam's metropolis—was the old capital of Sindh, and is still noted for its swords, matchlocks, and other arms. On the bank of the Indus opposite to it is Kotra, the upper terminus of the Sindh Railway, and it is in communication with Kurrachee, 100 miles distant, and other cities of the valley by steamers, railways, and native craft. Kurrachee, though surrounded by a sandy desert, and only a few years ago a collection of mud huts and poor houses, is now the main outlet for the trade of Sindh and the Punjab, and, owing to these circumstances and its accessibility during the prevalence of the south-west monsoon, has within the last three decades increased greatly. More than 1,000 vessels, including coasters, yearly enter its harbour—so called; and when the railway system of the Punjab and Sindh is completed, Sir W. Andrews believes that it will command much of the trade that now finds its way from the inner country to Calcutta on the one hand and to Bombay on the other. Shikarpore, of which Sir Richard Burton has given so characteristically graphic an account, is perhaps an even more typical Sindhian city than any of those we have noticed; and as a visit to it will give us an opportunity of noting some of the habits of the East, we may as well conclude the chapter with a notice of it and its people. It is twenty miles beyond Sukkur, and the moment the traveller alights in its busy streets he feels that he is very far away from the life of the West. True, the "Sahib" as the Englishman is conventionally termed, is here, with his pith helmet and his puggaree, his lordly stride and his unmistakable air of master. The Sahib Collector is punishing the evil and leaving the well alone, but above all, gathering the dues of the great Maharanee and her Soubadar, the Viceroy in Calcutta. There is also the Captain Sahib chaffering in the bazaar about some trifle which only a few years ago his predecessors of the army of Runjeet Singh would have taken with scant courtesy and no aches of conscience. But the "plunger" of Jacob's Horse good-naturedly wearies himself with cheapening a few rupees off the sword he is buying from the Lahore armourer, and meantime treads gingerly, lest his spurs should scratch the rank crop of naked legs in their vicinity.

The Captain is at home, and, from the respectful salaams and teeth-showing which meet him on every side, seems a familiar personage. We are making a journey in



imagination, and are not therefore bound down by the exigencies of chronology. Fearing no charge of anachronism, we may accordingly hazard a conjecture that the polyglot officer who escorts us through the Shikarpore bazaar is called Richard Burton, a well-known, greatly feared, and withal a much-respected name in the "Unhappy Valley," and in many other parts of the world which we shall never look upon. The student of mankind may here have a peripatetic museum. All India which loves

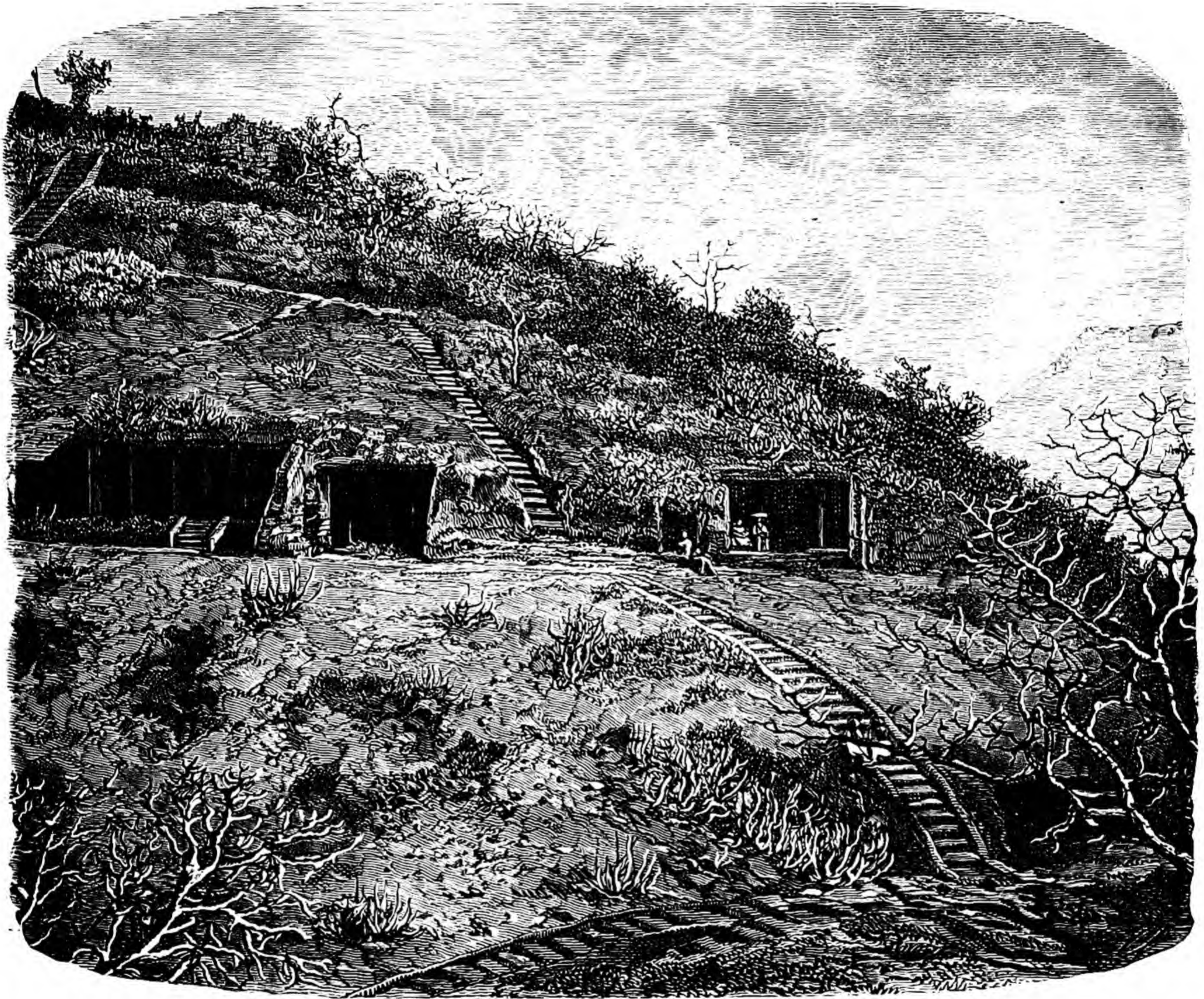


PARSEE COTTON MERCHANTS OF BOMBAY.

gold mohurs, rupees, or annas congregates thither, and every race from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, from Calcutta and Bombay, defiled of the Infidel, to Holy Bokhara, the Mecca of the Asiatic Mohammedan, jostle each other, intent on gain, pleasure, or the mere gratification of that curiosity which is the least of Oriental passions. It is a populous city of merchants, bankers, money-changers, dealers in every description of wares under the Indian sun, or which the wants of 300,000,000 people can call for. The town is built on a low-lying plain, surrounded by gardens and trees, which nevertheless do not prevent the entrance or the exit of the all-abounding dust, though they relieve with their tinge of freshness the hot glare and glitter of a sub-tropical town.



There is a broken mud wall crumbling into mouldering fragments, and the places where eight great shady Eastern gates had been, mute memorials of departed days and of the stronger arm that has now interposed itself between the citizens and their foes. The suburbs are large and straggling, and the streets—need we say it?—are narrow, crowded, and unclean. The houses are mostly of woodwork and sun-dried bricks, with low verandahs, and unglazed holes for windows. Public buildings there are none, and the



ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE-TEMPLES OF KANHARI, ISLE OF SALSETTE.

bungalows of the city's masters—civil and military—are outside the town. A few mosques tell of the prevalent faith of the people; but in Shikarpore assemble men of many creeds, and a good many whose god is Cent.-per-cent., the presiding deity of the Great Bazaar, which stretches across nearly the whole breadth of the city. It is a long, tall-walled passage, narrow, darkened, and guarded against the afternoon sun by mats laid over the beams which connect the houses on either side of it. At 4 p.m. it is High Change; then it is that the greed of filthy lucre runs its course.

Here is the flat-faced, broad-limbed little Brahui from the mountains of Beloochistan



—subjects of the Khan of Kelat, in much the same degree as are that knot of Afghans settling the price of their camels lieges of the Ameer of Cabul: that is to say, they are only nominally so, and in reality, when out of the range of his smooth-bore cannon, do pretty well what seems good or bad in their own eyes, within the circuit of their juzail slugs. The Afghans talk eagerly together, are energetic in their gestures, and though we do not understand what is the subject of discussion in Pushtu, when we look at their fierce flashing eyes we recognise the prudence of that regulation which compels them to deposit their arms in a place where they are not so likely to come in contact with their neighbour's fifth rib as if kept in their girdles. The Belooch is a freebooter, and eyes the possible plunder around with a sharp professional eye. A Sindhian gentleman, in brocaded cap and chintz-padded robe, passes by, preceded by a running footman, who pushes aside the mountaineer, and, judging from the wild-cat expression in the man's face, would probably have been paid for his insolence had the "charay" or single-edged dagger been as handy as in days prior to the British "Raj" it was. Shoulder to shoulder stand a brawny Mollah or priest from Herat, with a Hadji who has been to Mecca, and if the Persian proverb be true, a rogue among rogues. The rough-tongued Pathans stand bargaining with smooth-spoken Persians; "Candahar meets Mooltan, intent on preventing cheating by cheating; the tall turban of Jessulmere nods to the skull-cap of Peshin; and the white calico sleeve of Guzerat is grasped by the iron claw of Kelat. Here a greasy Moslem cook pours a ladleful of thick oil upon a fizzing mass of kababs, whose greasy streams, floating down the bazaar, attract a crowd of half-famished ryots to enjoy in imagination 'the pleasures of the table.' Here a Hindoo vendor of dried fruits, sugar, seeds, spices, opium, and hemp—the *tout ensemble* fragrant as an apothecary's shop in the dog-days—disposes of his wares to a knot of Jat ladies, with a pair of scales and a set of weights which would make Justice look her sternest. And here grim Eastern Cyclops—blacksmiths, tinmen, and armourers—are plying their clanging, clashing, ringing trade in an atmosphere of 150° and in the proximity of a fire that would roast a lamb." All is noise, yells, threats, counter-threats, chaffering, and din indescribable. Two crafty Hindoos settle a bargain with their hands concealed beneath a sheet, but otherwise not one copper coin changes owners without a dozen offerings and rejections, and an amount of bad language which would even appal a frequenter of Billingsgate, could he—or she—understand a tithe of the babel around. Bullion is all-valuable in the East; time is of no account. All the ninety-and-nine smells of the world are here, and at least one quite peculiar to the place itself. The ear is sick of noises: the nose suffers from the odours of the Orient, the lungs are poisoned with the stifling air: the very eye revolts at the sight of what it lights on.

As we pass out of the city to the Captain Sahib's bungalow we are struck with the appearance of some fresh arrivals who are dismounting from their camels. They have women and children with them in abundance, old men and young ones, all very independent-looking, but some of them, if the truth were known, slaves bought in the Khivan market, captives in the Persian valleys of the Turkoman bow and spear; but all are under a head, who directs the encampment and marshals the patriarchal-looking



throng. They are the Lohanee merchants, the wandering traders of Afghanistan and Central Asia, who yet conduct their business in the primitive fashion which prevailed in the days when Marco Polo pilgrimed unto the Great Khan of Tartary, or in that still remoter day when the merchantmen going "down into Egypt" invested in Joseph as part of their venture. These Lohanee traders—or Provindiahs, as they are called—have their homes about Ghuznee, where they spend the summer. They then descend the passes before they are blocked up by the snow, between Ghuznee and the Indus, in vast caravans of eight or ten thousand souls, the whole tribe moving bodily, men, women, children, and cattle, carrying their goods on camels and ponies. At Derajat they leave their aged people and children in black felt tents, with their flocks and herds in the rich pastures bordering on the Indus, while the able-bodied men—who must deposit their weapons at the first frontier British post—push across the Punjab with their goods for sale either in that province, in Sindh, or in the cities on the banks of the Ganges, where their carpets, felts, wool, bullion, and chrysolite rosaries always find a ready market. These old-world merchants are found far afield, and are not above taking advantage of steamboats and railway trains to help them on their journeys. In the bazaars of Delhi and Agra, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Mirzapore, and even Calcutta, Bombay, Rangoon, and Assam, the shepherd-traders—distinguished by their tall figures, independent bearing, and pre-eminently dirty persons—can be seen. They push ahead of the main body, taking with them a few samples, letters of credit, &c., and arrange bargains preparatory to the arrival of the caravans or kafilas. In the Bolan Pass, which is their usual route to India, they are liable to be attacked by the wild mountaineers; but, as a rule, their numbers enable them to compound with these clansmen for a reasonable amount of black-mail. Sir Bartle Frere tells of the wife of an "eminent merchant" of this tribe, whose husband had been detained longer than he expected at Delhi, offering the Kafila-Bashee, or head of the caravan, demurrage at the rate of 10,000 rupees (£1,000) a day to defer the upward march of the caravan, so as to enable her lord to rejoin it, as she knew that, if left behind, he would be unable to follow them through the passes except at great risk to his life and property. These merchants are many of them very wealthy, for they do an annual trade of at least a million and a half sterling. Eastward they go to Calcutta, and westward to the great market of Bokhara. Here they bring English cloths, sugar, indigo, Benares brocades, gold thread and lace, leather, groceries, and drugs; and carry back to India Russian gold and silver wire, raw silk and silk fabrics, carpets, Afghan postins or pelisses, rosaries, horses, almonds, raisins, preserved fruits of many kinds, furs, bullion, and such-like articles. With these men we may journey as far as we choose to go, provided, firstly, that we pay them; secondly, that they care to take the risk of escorting a possible spy; and thirdly—which is our business—that we are willing to risk being flayed alive or tortured to death in a pit of sheep-ticks, as were poor Conolly and Stoddart. These provisos are easily overcome, for we live in mythical times of piping peace, and are not troubled with the difficulties that encompass more material wanderers in Upper Asia. But we must have money. We may pay the Provindiah his baksheesh, and pile on our camels stores to last us till we arrive at a place where they can be conveniently renewed. But the moment we cross the British boundary, and



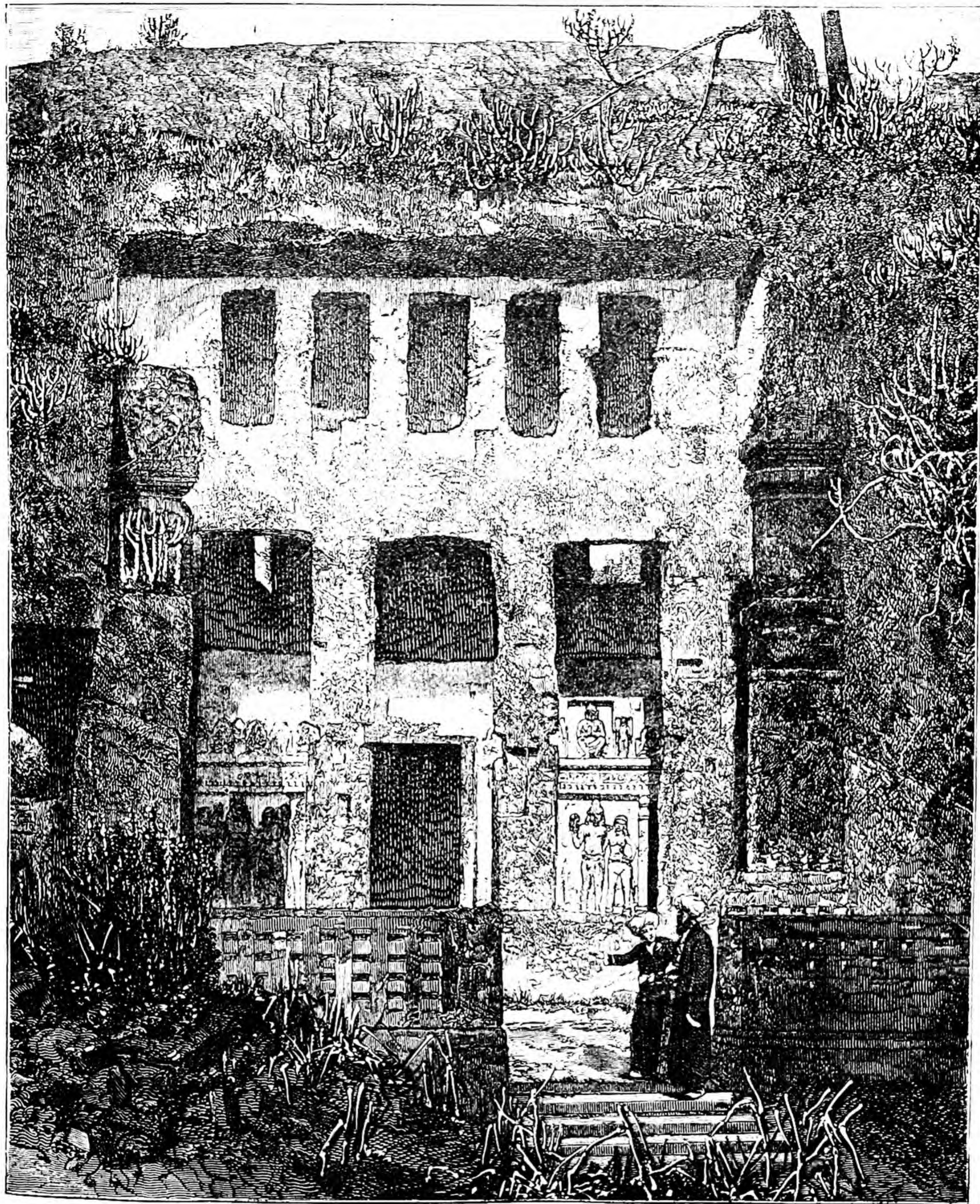
even long before we do so, we shall have a hundred expenses to meet, presents to make, provisions to buy for our return journey, goods to purchase, and what in Spain are pleasantly called "gratifications" to bestow on the itching palms of Sirdars and Khans and greedy chiefs galore.

We must therefore have money, but not coin; for we are entering a land where the sight of a gold piece will be the most certain method of meeting the fate which the gods decree for those they love. As we have as yet no desire for a sudden death, we seek a "shroff," who will give us a letter of credit—some kind of circular note, "of no value to any one but the owner." We have no difficulty in obtaining this, and, indeed, in Shikarpore bankers are proportionately more numerous than in the City of London, and for our purposes infinitely more so.\* We are recommended to one as more than ordinarily honest—or, rather, it would be better to say, less thievish than usual—that is, he will be strictly upright in his dealings so long as his credit is at stake, but when self-interest will allow him to steal, then the client has really no chance with him. He is a miserable, wizened-looking wretch, on whose countenance avarice has set its seal, and who, though probably worth a lac or two of rupees,† will submit to almost any indignity to increase the hoard. His turban and waist-cloth were once white (though not recently); his hand holds a rosary; behind his ear is a long reed pen, and over his shoulder he wears the thread of the "thrice-born." He is a Brahmin, and therefore scorns the rest of the world—and his present customer among the rest; yet he cringes to us, as he would cringe to the meanest Sindhian who ever wore a turban, if he saw his way to make an anna out of him. The Moslem fanatics curse his shaven pate, and though he could buy the principality of the mountaineers who insult him, yet nothing in the world would induce him to return insult for insult—nothing, indeed, but an attempt to steal one of the piles of copper or silver before him. Then all the gods of his fathers, all the incarnations of Siva and Brahma and Vishnu would not suffice to ease the Hindoo Shylock's mind of the latent execrations with which it is laden. The Hindoo Shikarporees are pre-eminently bankers, and in less than a century—for they were only allowed to migrate hither in 1786—have extended their operations over half of Asia. From China to Turkey, from Astrakhan to Hyderabad, a Shikarporee letter of credit can be easily cashed in almost any considerable town. The Shikarporee Hindoos, whom Timur Shah, the Afghan monarch, first permitted to settle here, chiefly belonged to Lobana and Bhatia castes, common in Scinde and the southern part of the Punjab, and by their enterprise have made Shikarpore what it is. Without question or demur, six months' journey from this remote Sindhian bazaar, the signature of that miserable-looking wretch—to whom, not without forebodings as to their latter end, we have paid our rupees—will be honoured by the condescending cashier of the Agra or London and Delhi, or by some shrivelled, rag-enveloped "anatomy" in Cabul or Candahar. His circular note is called a

\* In these notes, throughout which it is hardly necessary to say I owe nearly everything to Sir R. Burton's works on Sindh, the famous bazaar at Shikarpore is spoken of as it used to be some years ago. Kurrachee has, however, now absorbed much of its trade, and is rapidly superseding it as the meeting-place of the nations. Bombay, the second most populous city of the British Empire, is fully described in Mr. Maclean's "Guide."

† A lac is 100,000; a crore is 10,000,000.





THE PRINCIPAL GROTTTO OF KANHARI, ISLE OF SALSETTE.

"Hundi," and is written in execrable penmanship on a piece of bank-note paper, but the reader will see that it is so worded as to put the possibility of "raising" out of the field. Forgery is equally difficult, for the note has private marks, only known to the "shroff"



and his correspondents, who would accordingly instantly detect the most cleverly-manufactured "Hundi." Here is a free translation:—

"1½. True is the deity Sri.\*

"1. To the worthy of every respect: may you be always in good health. May you always be happy, Mr. Brother Jesu Mal.

"2. From Shikarpore, written by Kisordas; read his compliments.

"3. And further, sir, this one hundi of 1,000 rupees I have written on you in numerals, and in letters rupees 1,000, and the half, which is five hundred, of which the double is one thousand complete: dated.....of.....in the year of Vikramaditya;† to be paid at.....after the term of.....days to the bearer: the money to be of the currency of the place. In the year of Vikramaditya, &c. &c."

If you have no money you can be "accommodated." A "Sahib" is generally considered good security, though to be sure, if you are bound to a region of evil report—say to Cabul—you must pay something extra—say 15 per cent. For what says the Sindhian proverb: "Meet a cobra and an Afghan—kill the Afghan!" However, we have no intention of testing the wisdom of the advice, for we have still something to say about India proper, and about the tributary States, foreign settlements, and finances of that country.

## CHAPTER X.

### INDIA: NATIVE STATES: FOREIGN POSSESSIONS.

IN the preceding chapter, while speaking of the different Presidencies and provinces, we have had occasion more than once to refer to native States comprised within their bounds. These States are, in the vast majority of cases, only nominally independent. They are ruled by native princes, who owe allegiance, either as tributaries or as direct suffragans, to England, the cases in which they are actually "sovereign powers" being few. Even then, they must conduct themselves in a manner agreeable to the English "raj," otherwise they speedily discover that their independence is little more than a paper euphemism. In the brief sketch which follows the admirable account of Colonel Malleson will for the most part be followed, though in its compilation other authorities have also been consulted. The exhaustive work of the former guardian of the Maharajah of Mysore is, however, so complete that it was almost impossible to glean any facts for our pages that had not already been found

\* This is the invariable preamble; but what is the meaning of "1½" no one, not even the "shroff" himself, seems to know.

† The founder of a Hindoo era.



and sifted in that treatise.\* Accordingly, following his arrangement, we may first notice those States which are in subsidiary alliance with the British Government; next the mediatised and minor provinces, those which, though “under the suzerainty of, are not in direct alliance with, the British Government;” and finally—but in another chapter—Beloochistan, Nepaul, Gurkha, Sikkim, Bhotan, Afghanistan, and Persia, which in different degrees may be said to be independent. Beloochistan and the semi-pacified kingdom of Afghanistan can hardly be said to be their own masters. Nepaul and the three States classed with it are more so, while Persia is, of course, though in close relation with India, a power—theoretically, at least—as much independent as Russia and China, both of which are becoming our close neighbours. The kingdom of Siam we have already fully considered, so that its relative degree of independence need not be further discussed.

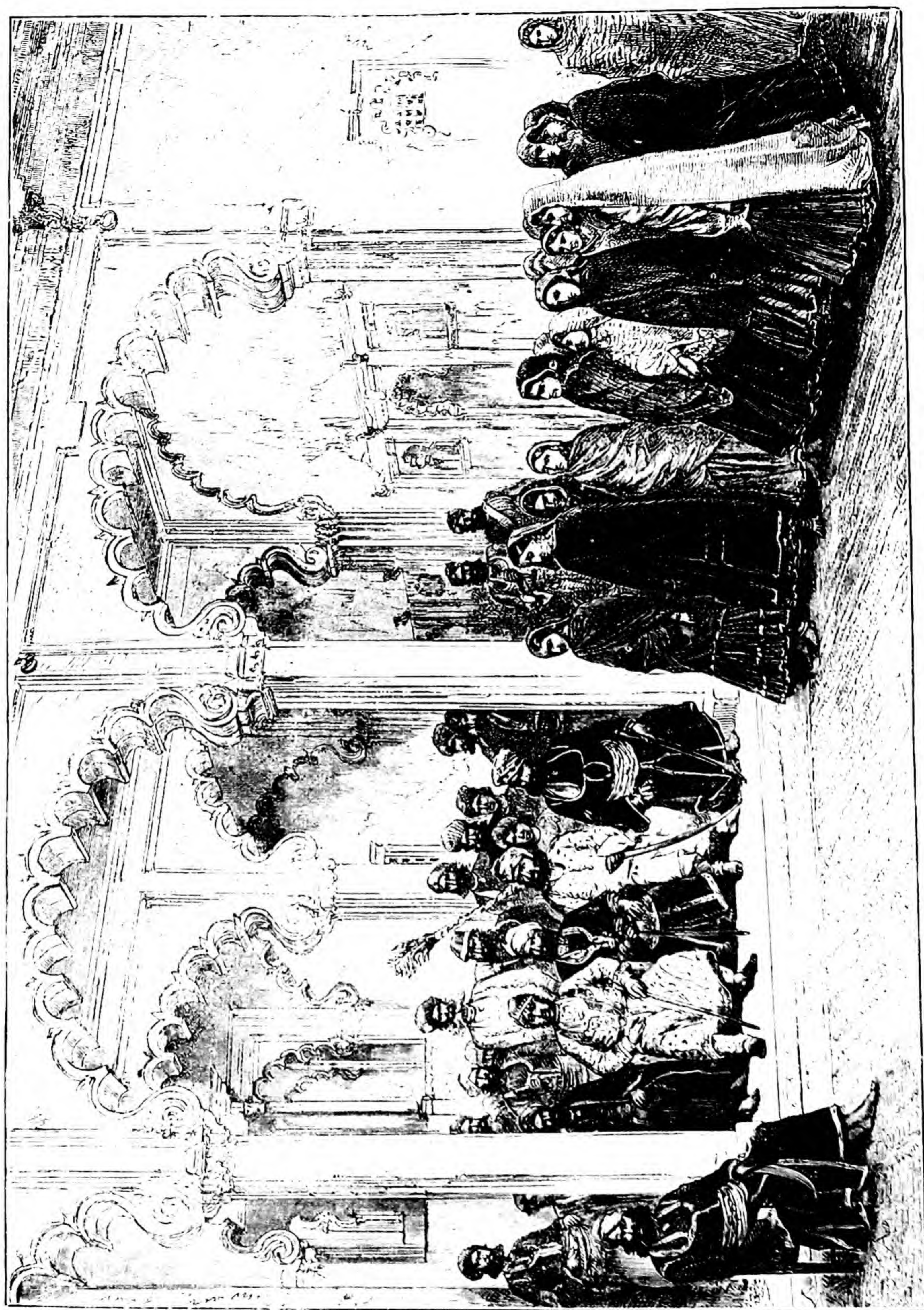
There may be said to be four great epochs in Indian history. The first is that early unhistorical one in which the Hindoo race lived more or less peaceably, and advanced to the high state of culture which we know it possessed at the period when first we become acquainted with it, from more exact sources than traditionary poems and monuments, which tell a tale after the manner in which the questioner chooses to interpret them. When Mahmoud of Ghuznee invaded the country, in the eleventh century, the Moslem epoch began. Under his rule the native kingdoms—and more especially those peopled by the fine race of Rajputs—enjoyed a great degree of prosperity and even of independence, a favour which in varying degrees was extended to them under his more or less able successors. But with the rise of the warlike Mahrattas the Mogul Empire fell, and with it the large measure of freedom enjoyed by the other native princes. The Mahrattas continued to rule over large portions of the country, either directly or as suzerains, until, in 1818, the English, for good and all, crushed them. From that year the British era for India may be dated.

Little by little—and sometimes very rapidly—the area of the native States of India has been, by the force of circumstances, circumscribed, nor unless some great misfortune befalls our race is it likely that the country under the rule of Hindoo or Mohammedan princes will ever be much extended. Indeed, the chances are that the small kingdoms will merge into the greater empire, either by the wish of the people or by the folly of their sovereigns, and thus be fortunate enough to share directly in the newer and better *régime* which India enjoys under its latest conquerors.

However, there are still 500,000 square miles—three times the area of the German Empire, nearly five times that of the United Kingdom, three times that of France, and not much short of a sixth as great an area as is comprised by the United States of America—under native princes. This region is inhabited by over 55,000,000 people—as many as there are in North America, and fully 20,000,000 more than are contained in the British Islands—comprising some of nearly all the nationalities which find their homes within the bounds of Hindostan. They do not, it is almost needless to say, live all in one great tract of country, but are scattered over the whole of the empire—here a small kingdom and there a large one, in the midst of this Presidency several,

\* “An Historical Sketch of the Native States of India in Subsidiary Alliance with the British Government” (1875); see also a series of papers in the *Times* (London), August 20th, August 26th, and September 2nd, 1884.





NAUTCH, OR DANCING GIRLS, AT THE COURT OF THE RANA OF OODEYPORE.



and tacked on to the borders of that other province far off, a native State, inhabited by a people speaking the same tongue, but having no connection with it. However, these native territories, as Colonel Malleson has justly observed, form so many centres where the Sikh, the Mohammedan, the Rajput, the Mahratta, and the Dravidian—that is, the most primitive stock of all—can each bring out to the best advantage whatever may be peculiar and excellent in his national character and national institutions, “under the generalising influence of English principles and English civilisation.” Viewed from an ethnological point of view, they may be classed as follows:—(1) There is an Indo-Chinese group, such as Manipore and the other small principalities bordering Assam and Lower Bengal; (2) There are aboriginal chieftains in Chota Nagpore, Orissa, Jeypore, and the Central Provinces; (3) The countries which girdle the Western Himalayas, from Kashmir to Gurwhal and Rampore, are for the most part Hindoo; (4) Beyond the Indus there are Afghan tribes; (5) There are the Sikh States of Sirhind, such as Puttiala, Jhind, Narbah, Nahan, and Kotgarh; (6) There are Mohammedan States, like Bhawlpore and Khyrpore, in or close to Sindh; (7) There are the Mahratta States of Indore and Gwalior, and the States and chieftainships of Malwa and Bundelkhund; (8) The Rajpoot kingdoms of Rajpootana; (9) The cluster of little States in Kattywar and the northern half of Bombay; (10) Kolapore and the other Mahratta States of the Concan and Western Ghauts; (11) The Mohammedan kingdom of Hyderabad; and finally, (12) the old Malayan States of Travancore and Cochin, in Southern India, to which may be added the Hindoo State of Mysore. But the rulers and the ruled are not always of the same race and religion. For example, a Hindoo rajah reigns in Travancore; a Mohammedan begum governs Bhopal; a Sikh dynasty sits on the ancient throne of Kashmir; Scindia’s subjects are for the most part not Mahrattas; and in the great Moslem kingdom of Hyderabad the Hindoos and Dravidians outnumber the followers of the Nizam’s faith. The rulers of a Hindoo dynasty are styled Rajah, or Maharajah, Rana, and Rao, or if a female, Ranee; while their “Barons” are Thakures and Sirdars. The Mohammedan princes are, on the other hand, Sultans, Nawabs, Ameers, or Khans, the latter title being also one applied to men of rank of the blood royal or otherwise.\* Of the native States more or less under the control of the Indian Government, there are about 386,000 square miles which the Governor-General takes direct cognizance of; the Lieutenant-Governors, or Commissioners of Bengal, the North-west Provinces, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces, control respectively, 79,000, 6,000, 44,000, and 28,000 square miles; while the Governors of Madras and Bombay rule indirectly, the first over 32,000, and the second over 72,000 square miles of feudatory native States.

#### RAJPOOTANA.

The princes of this wild country are among the most important of the tributary sovereigns of India. Much of the region is uninhabited, consisting mainly of rocky hills and broad sandy plains tenanted only by wild beasts, though the fertile tracts

\* Andrews: *lib. cit.*, pp. 197, 198.



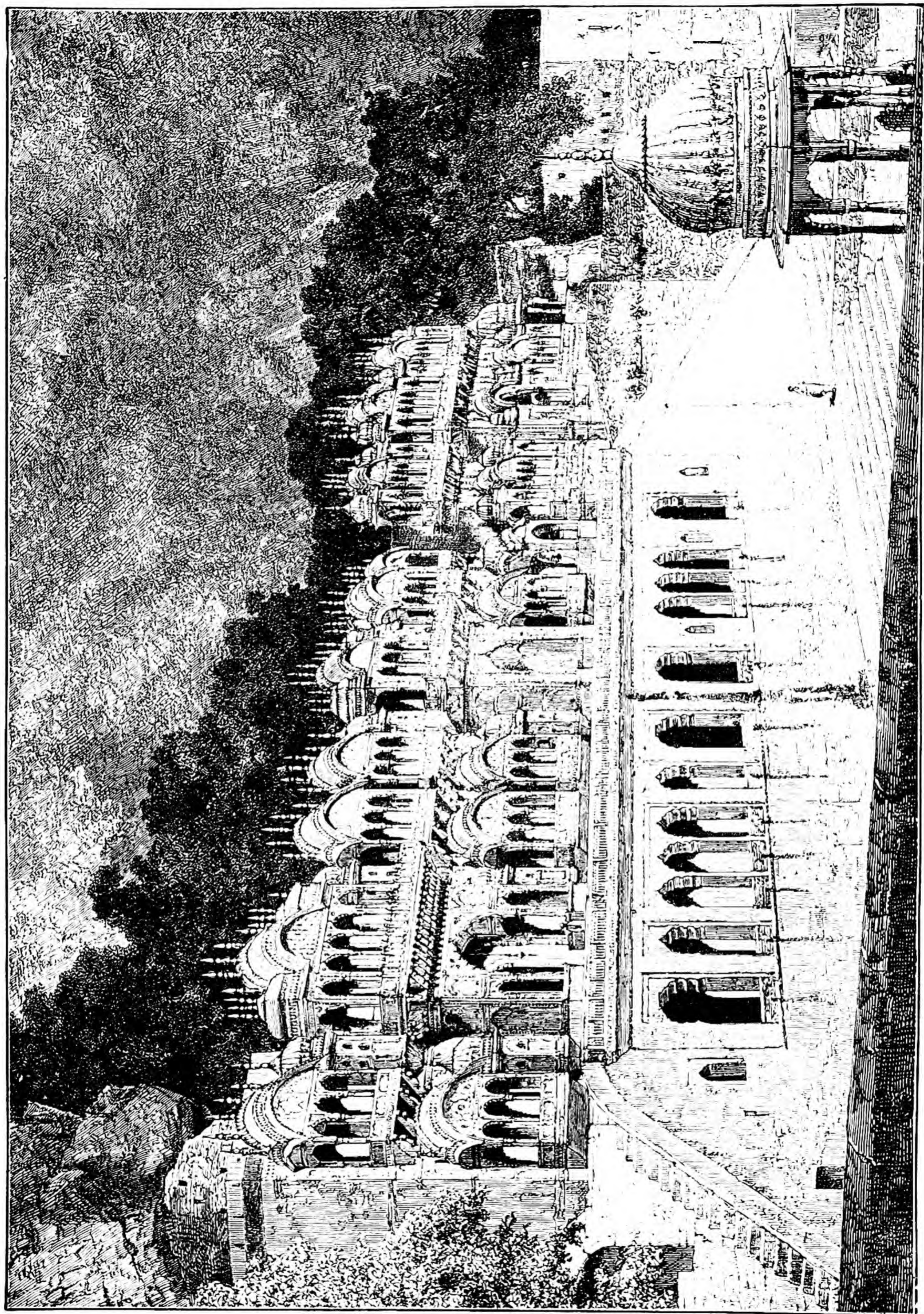
support herds of sheep, horses, and camels, and yield crops of corn, tobacco, sugar, cotton, opium, &c. The people are for the most part Hindoos, and are noted for their high spirit, pride, and courage. Oodeypore, or Mewar, whose Rana (pp. 244, 248) ranks highest among the Rajpoot princes, is one of the most important of the States, but the enlightenment of the Maharajah of Jeypore has given his State and capital a distinguished place among the progressive native kingdoms. Jeypore, indeed, is almost a modern city, and is certainly one of the handsomest in India.

Joudpore, or Marwar, is the largest of the Rajpoot kingdoms, though not the most populous. Bundi, Kotah, Jhalawar, Tonk, Karauli, Kishengurh, Dholpore, Sirohi, Bharatpore, and Alwar are all States of more or less consequence or pettiness, while Bikanir and Jessulmere, though each with a larger area than Oodeypore, are much less thickly peopled or prosperous. They lie among the sand-hills of the "Great Indian Desert," and hence are isolated from the teeming regions to the north, east, and south of them. Dongarpore is a very petty State, having not more than 100,000 inhabitants, but its Rawul, or chief, claims to represent the senior branch of the House of Oodeypore. Banswara is not much larger, though it, again, has a large number of feudatories who owe direct allegiance to its Rawul. Partabgarh is about the same size and wealth as the two just mentioned, and, like them, adopted British protection in order to escape from the grinding yoke of the Mahratta princes who, in the latter days of the Mogul Empire, were its virtual sovereigns. Like most of his compeers, he has also been rewarded for his loyalty during the Mutiny by receiving the right of adoption—a privilege which is regarded very highly by the childless Indian kings. Next to this, precedence at a durbar, or levée, and the number of guns which he is to receive as a salute, most excite the languid minds of these potentates, and the squabbles and heartburnings over this subject make the life of the Viceroy's master of the ceremonies akin to that of a toad under the harrow. The inhabitants of many of the group of States last mentioned belong, it may be remarked, to the Jats, a race which some ethnologists will insist on claiming as the progenitors of the European gipsies.

#### CENTRAL INDIA AND MALWA.

The chief of these kingdoms are Gwalior, or the Dominions of Scindia, and Indore, or the Dominions of Holkar. Gwalior is a Mahratta kingdom, which after many contests with the English, remained their feudatories up to 1857. In that dismal year the young Maharajah Jaiaji Scindia, after having failed to keep his contingent faithful to their liege lords, had to flee from his kingdom. But he soon regained power, and ever since has had honours heaped upon him, receiving, among other distinctions, a general's commission in the British army. Until its return to his custody (in 1885), there was no attempt to conceal the fact that he resented the presence of a British garrison in the fortress overlooking his capital, and it was no secret that for years he had been quietly putting all his male adult subjects through the army, while still keeping up the perfectly unnecessary force which he was allowed by the terms of his treaty with the English Government. These native armies are indeed sad nonsense. They are not required. As the tributary princes can neither go





TEMPLES OF THE KING, AT ULWUR.



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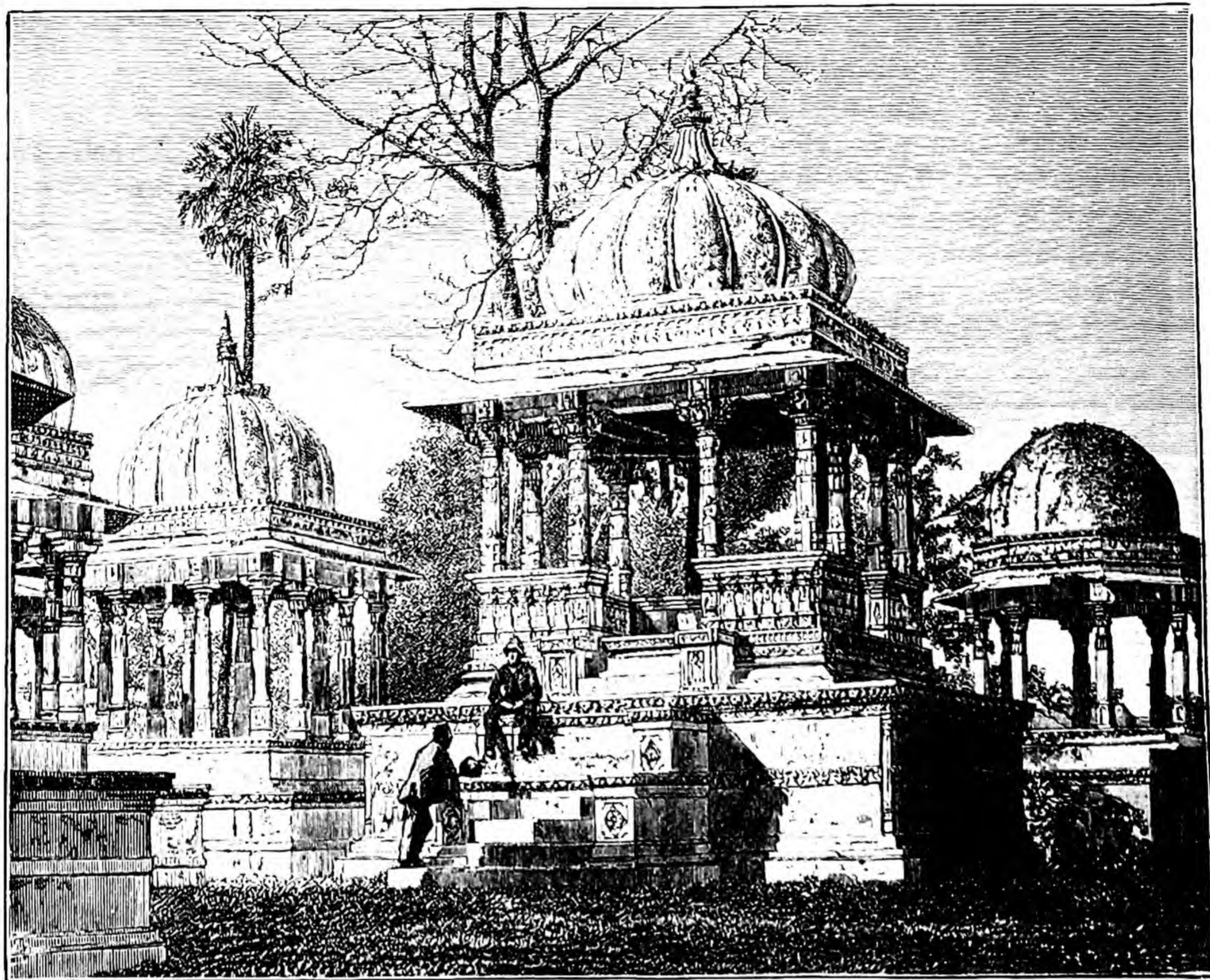
to war nor be invaded so long as they remain faithful to their suzerain, we can but conclude that they only hope to be able to work future mischief when they display anxiety to increase their forces. At best the system is extravagant, and very oppressive to their people. However, the armies are usually such a mob of incompetent ragamuffins that it is doubtful whether they could ever be effective for evil, or—what probably concerns us most, since it has lately been the fashion for the feudatories to proffer their services to us—for good, as allies. Indore is ruled by a descendant of Mulhar Rao Holkar, a Mahratta of the shepherd caste. His country contains over 8,000 square miles, and has a population of some half a million, being thus only about a fifth of the size and populousness of Scindia's. Holkar's troops rebelled during the Mutiny, but his son, the present Maharajah, is well disposed to England. His tastes, unlike Scindia's, are not military but social. His father was interested in revenue questions, and if all tales are true, in a "cotton deal" was sharper than was always agreeable to the other party to his bargains. His late Prime Minister (Sir Madhava Rao) is universally acknowledged to be one of the most acute and accomplished men of his race, and to have conducted greatly to the prosperity which the kingdom at present enjoys. Bhopal is a considerable State, being rather smaller, and less thickly populated, than Indore. The present ruler is a Begum, or queen, who governs the country with great prudence and wisdom. Dhar is a smaller State, ruled by a Rajah of the "Puar" family; and Dewas is a still tinier one, having a population of only 25,000. But it is, according to an old custom, governed by two Rajahs, with equal power, though, as is by no means uncommon in India, they have no legitimate male children. Indeed, in this dynasty there is no record of any such heirs ever having been born, the line being kept up by adoption of children. Jaora is a larger State, and its Nawab—who in the troublous times of the Mutiny was the only chief who boldly took the field with Sir Henry Durand—has ever been on excellent terms with us.

#### BUNDELKHUND AND WESTERN INDIA.

Under this division—Bundelkhund—comes Rewa, a large principality, containing some 2,000,000 people; Oorcha, or Tehri, with less than a sixth of that number of subjects; Datia, still smaller, and Samptar with 30,000 people. In Western India the kingdom of Baroda or the dominions of the Gaikwar is the most important, and that which, owing to the events of the last few years, has attracted much attention in England. The State comprises 8,580 square miles, with a population of 2,200,000. Like most of the modern native kingdoms, Baroda was carved out of the Mogul Empire by a successful soldier of fortune—Damja Gaikwar, or "the Herdsman"—a title his successors have ever since proudly retained. The late ruler, being more than suspected of an attempt to poison the British Resident at his court, was deposed in 1875, and a child belonging to another branch of the family placed on the throne, under the tutelage of Sir Madhava Rao, whose abilities had been already proved during the period in which he administered the Governments of Travancore and Indore. Kolhapore, another considerable kingdom, is still governed by a descendant of the famous



Sivaji (p. 202). Sawunt Wari is a small principality, whose ruler is kept under strict surveillance by the English Government; and Cutch has nearly half a million of people, a small number compared with the extent of country. Most of it is, however, little better than a desert fringed by "grassy plains, and fields of rice, cotton, sugar-cane, or millet." The present Rao has under him some 200 minor chiefs, each of whom wields in his own



CIMETERY OF MAHA SATI,\* AT AHAR, NEAR OODEYPORE.

territory almost sovereign power; but in spite of these feudal potentates the country is prosperous, and owing to the industry of its people yields a revenue of £210,000.

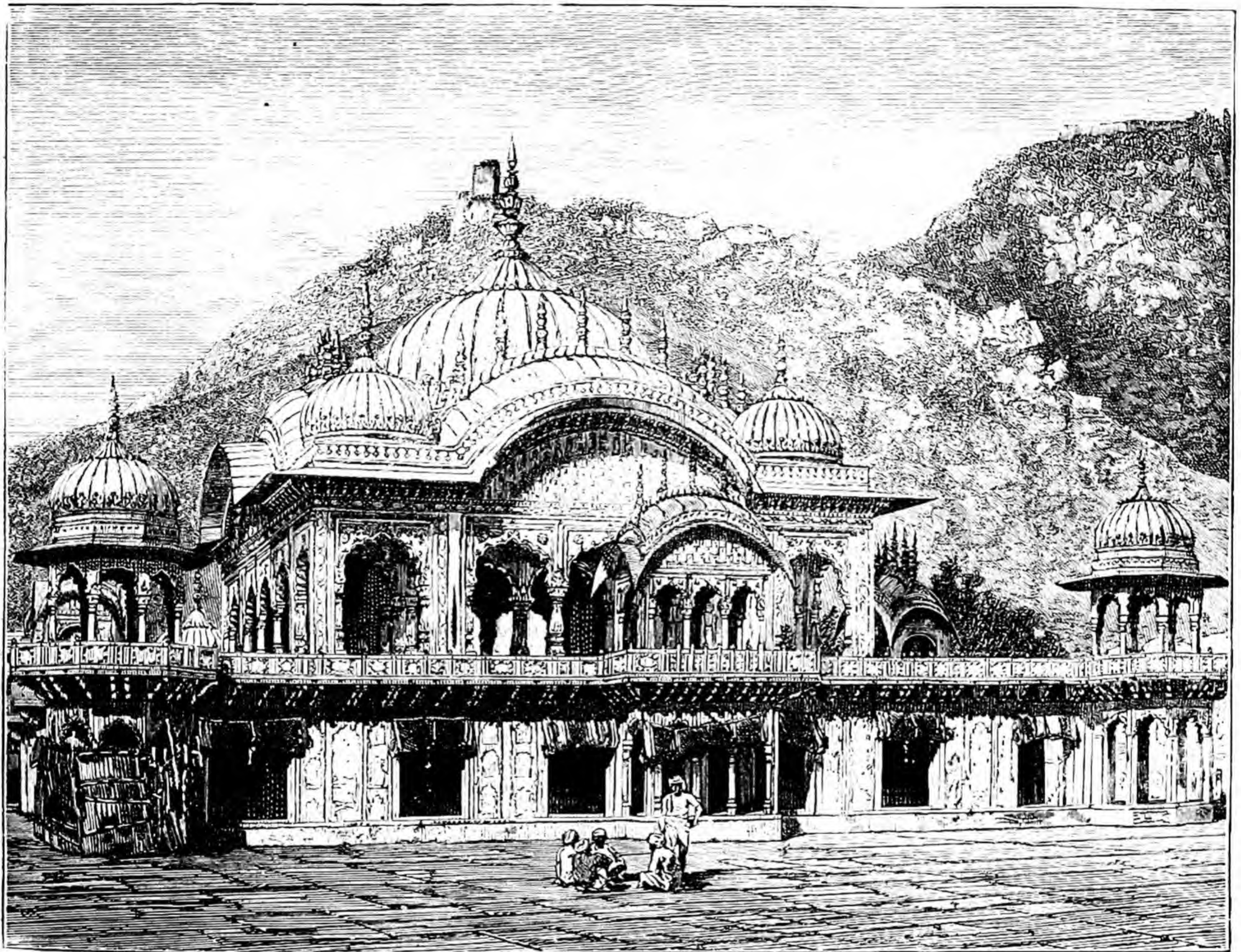
#### SOUTHERN INDIA.

In this region Hyderabad, or the Dominions of the Nizam, is the most important kingdom. It is, indeed, the largest native State in India, being larger than Great Britain, though with only a third of the population of these islands. The present ruler, under a wise minister, has kept up agreeable relations with the British Government, though it

\* Maha Sati signifies "the great sacrifice of Suttee."



has long been a sore grievance with the Nizam that we still retain the fertile province of Berar. This tract of country was ceded to us in 1853, in lieu of arrears of interest on loans granted to the Nizam, but on the understanding that its surplus revenues should be handed over to the Hyderabad treasury, after defraying the cost of the Nizam's Contingent. The capital Sir W. Andrew describes as a large and populous city, tenanted



THE MAUSOLEUM OF RAJAH BUKTAWUR AT ULWUR.

chiefly by people of the prevailing Mussulman faith, and adorned with mosques, a fine palace, and the imposing group of buildings used as the British residency. Sikunderabad is the site of the cantonment for the troops, and between this suburb and the city "a sea of verdure" lies. The ruined city of Golconda, once famous for its diamond mines, lies a few miles west, and not far off is the field of Assaye, where Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of Wellington) routed the Mahrattas in 1803. Hyderabad being well watered by the Godavery, the Krishna, the Wurda, and their tributaries, is rich in natural resources, and in the coal-fields lately opened out it has a greater means of future wealth than it ever possessed in its ancient diamond mines.



Mysore we have already sufficiently noticed (p. 231). Travancore is a State of 2,400,000 people, noted for its prosperity, schools, roads, reservoirs, and yearly surplus, after defraying the expenses of the Government—this model native kingdom thus being an exception not only to its neighbours, but also to the Imperial Government—it being unnecessary to say that a surplus in the Calcutta treasury is a something unknown to latter-day India. Cochin\* is a small State to the south of Malabar, which for centuries maintained its independence against native and foreign aggression until it fell under Hyder Ali. In return for the aid the English gave him in expelling that conqueror, the Zamorin pays us tribute to the amount of £20,000 per annum, in addition to the cost of maintaining a battalion of native infantry. The country is, however, prosperous. It consists of a part of the level flat hemmed in between the sea and the Ghauts, in addition to the latter range of mountains which wall it off from inner India. Accordingly, it is everywhere cut through by mountain streams, which in places form “backwaters” (p. 182). Great crops of rice are grown on the lowlands, and from the hills the torrents carry down to the coast immense quantities of timber, particularly teak, which, though vastly decreased in abundance, still exists in the north-eastern part of the State, and forms no inconsiderable source of wealth. Cotton, pepper, betel-nuts, ginger, and the usual Indian crops grow well, and coffee, which has of late been introduced, promises to add another item to the wealth of this flourishing feudatory kingdom of Southern India.

#### NORTHERN INDIA.

Among the cis-Sutlej States, Puttiala, with more than a million and a half of people, is the most important. It occupies part of Sirhind that great plain between the Sutlej and the Jumna, where so many battles for the mastery of India have been fought. The noble services of its Maharajah and people have raised it high into the favour of the English Government. Indeed, it is owing to the acuteness of its ruler that Puttiala has been gradually increased. One of the sovereigns aided us in a war against Nepaul, another in the contest with the Sikhs; whilst the late occupant of the throne not only kept the road from Delhi to Lahore open during the Mutiny year, but lent money and troops freely to the Indian Government. For these offices he was amply rewarded, and the favour has been extended to the two Maharajahs who have subsequently reigned in his stead. The Rajahs of Jhind and Nabha, though governing States not of such importance as Puttiala, are equally loyal to us. Kalsia is a smaller State ruled by a Sirdar; Maler Kotla is thickly inhabited, and is governed by a Nawab of Pathan descent, the family to which he belongs having originally come from Cabul to take service under the Mogul Emperors. The State of Faridkot was, up to the Sikh war of 1845–6, in the possession of the family of Mokam Chand, Prime Minister at Lahore, who had seized the sovereignty. But in that year the British Government, to mark their appreciation of the services of the Chief of Faridkot, restored him to the confiscated throne with the rank of Rajah. Kapurthala, Mandi, Chamba, and Sakit, are among the minor

\* Day: “Land of the Permauls” (1862).



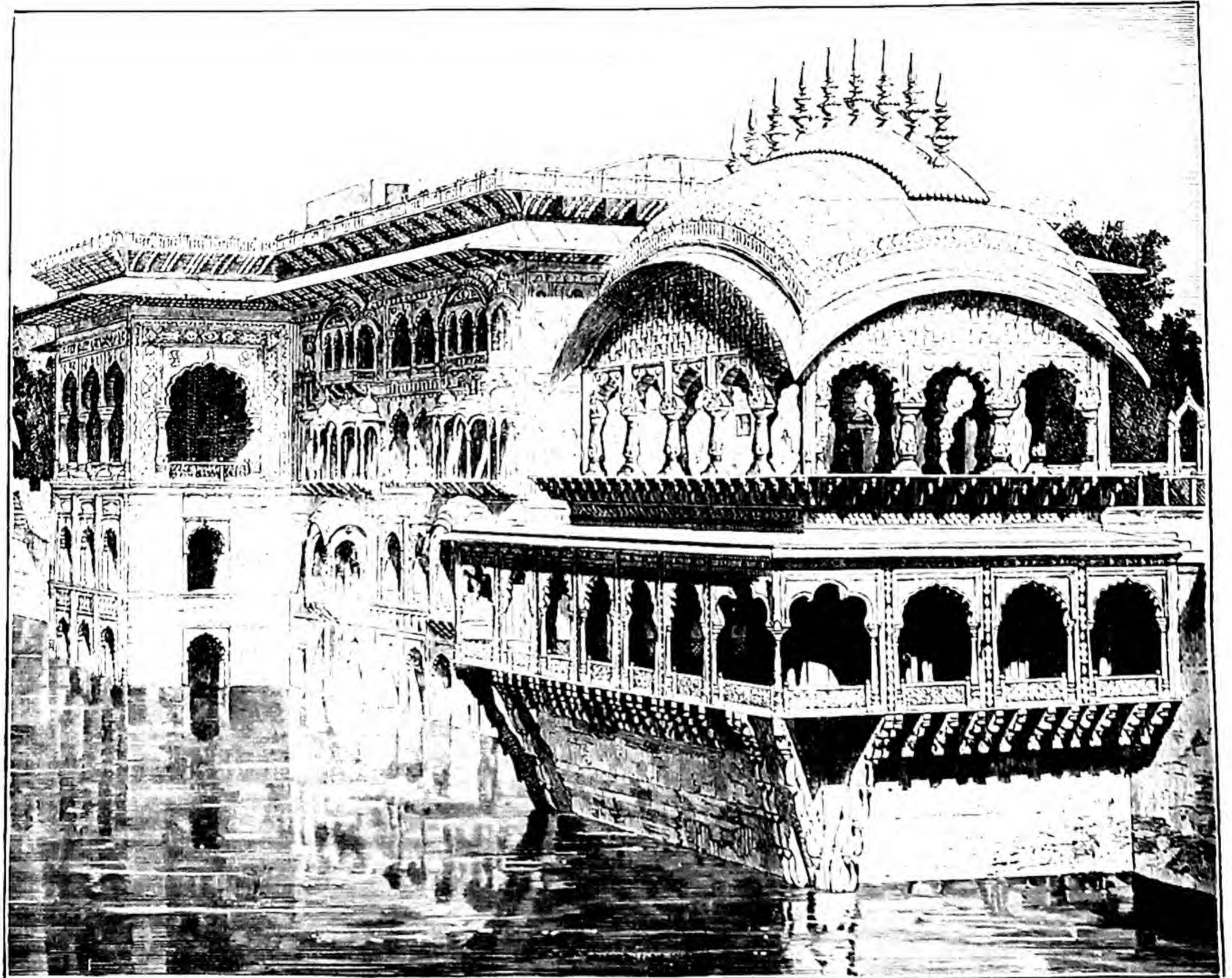
trans-Sutlej States. Khyrpore and Bhawulpore are Mohamedan kingdoms, which stretch along the left bank of the Sutlej and the Indus. The latter has an area of 6,000 square miles, and is a remnant of the family States of the Talpoor Ameers of Sindh, saved out of the general wreck of the fortunes of that family. Its ruler being detected in an attempt to gain more than his share by means of forged documents, was punished by having part of his dominions forfeited, and by being deposed from the rank of Reis to that of Meer. Bhawulpore is a long strip of country lying between the Indus and the desert which bounds Rajpootana on the north-west. It comprises some 15,000 miles, but only about a third of it is cultivated. The country has seen some stormy times, and was likely to sink into anarchy until the British Government interfered, and put the young Nawab under the tutelage of a tutor. He has been carefully educated, and in 1880 commenced to reign in his sovereign capacity.

But of all the States of Northern India, Cashmere, or, as it is now usually written, Kashmir, is the most important. Of its products and capabilities, some account has already been given (p. 196), but its prosperity bears but an indifferent ratio to its capabilities. With a larger area than Great Britain, it has a population not numbering more than a million, and is yearly threatened or devastated by famine. The present condition of the country is about as bad as bad can be, and if matters do not mend it is impossible to allow the easy, well-meaning, but supine Maharajah to misgovern the kingdom after the manner which has been the rule for so many years past. The kingdom includes not only the far-famed "Vale of Cashmere" but the hill-districts of Jammu, Baltistan, and the Tibetan district of Ladâk (pp. 104, 109). The people, though Moslems, are mostly of Hindoo race, with a mixture of Tartar and Tibetan elements, but the ruler is a Sikh prince, whose father was allowed to purchase the sovereignty of the province from us for £750,000 sterling. Previous to falling into our hands it had experienced the yoke of many successive masters, until, finally, the fall of Runjeet Singh brought it to us by right of conquest. The Maharajah owes fealty to England, and pays yearly a tribute of shawls, shawl-goats, and one horse. Srinagar, the capital (p. 256), has been called the Venice of the East, from the fact of the Jhelum river on which it is built permeating almost every part of it. It is a picturesque pleasant town, and as Cashmere has of late years become the favourite holiday haunt of English officers, and even of English tourists, has been described and figured in a multitude of books.\* The reports which reached the India Office during 1879-80 gave a forbidding picture of the condition of matters in the lovely valley. Famine raged, yet it is affirmed that food existed in abundance at Srinagar, and that had the supplies there been properly distributed no one need have suffered, instead of thousands dying of starvation. The Maharajah's officials, it was said, laid their hands on all the supplies the Government obtained, and then retailed them to the famine-stricken people at exorbitant prices, or, as some accounts declared, stored them up in granaries so that the Mohammedan majority might be compelled to die of sheer want. In this manner the Dogra officials gratified their greed, or their religious and political antipathies.

\* Wakefield: "The Happy Valley" (1879); Ince: "Handbook to Kashmir" (1877); Cunningham: "Ladâk" (1854); Drew: "The Northern Barrier of India" (1874); Wheeler: "Imperial Assemblage at Delhi" (1878); "The Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India" (1874-84); Balfour: "Cyclopædia of India" (3rd edition), etc.



The Maharajah's ambition is to extend his kingdom in the direction of Tibet, and by the conquest of Ladāk, and the still more recent operations in the Gilgit Valley, some progress has been made in that direction. Ranbir-Singh, the present sovereign, is, like Scindia, a general in the British army. But if the bill of indictment which has been presented against him be true, his generalship had always best remain of a purely honorary description. He resides for the greater part of the year at Jammu, allowing the Valley



THE GOPAL BHOWAN IN THE PALACE OF DIGH.

of Cashmere, as in former times, to be governed by a deputy, to whose misconduct is due the present condition of a country endowed with every element of prosperity, but possessing none of it.

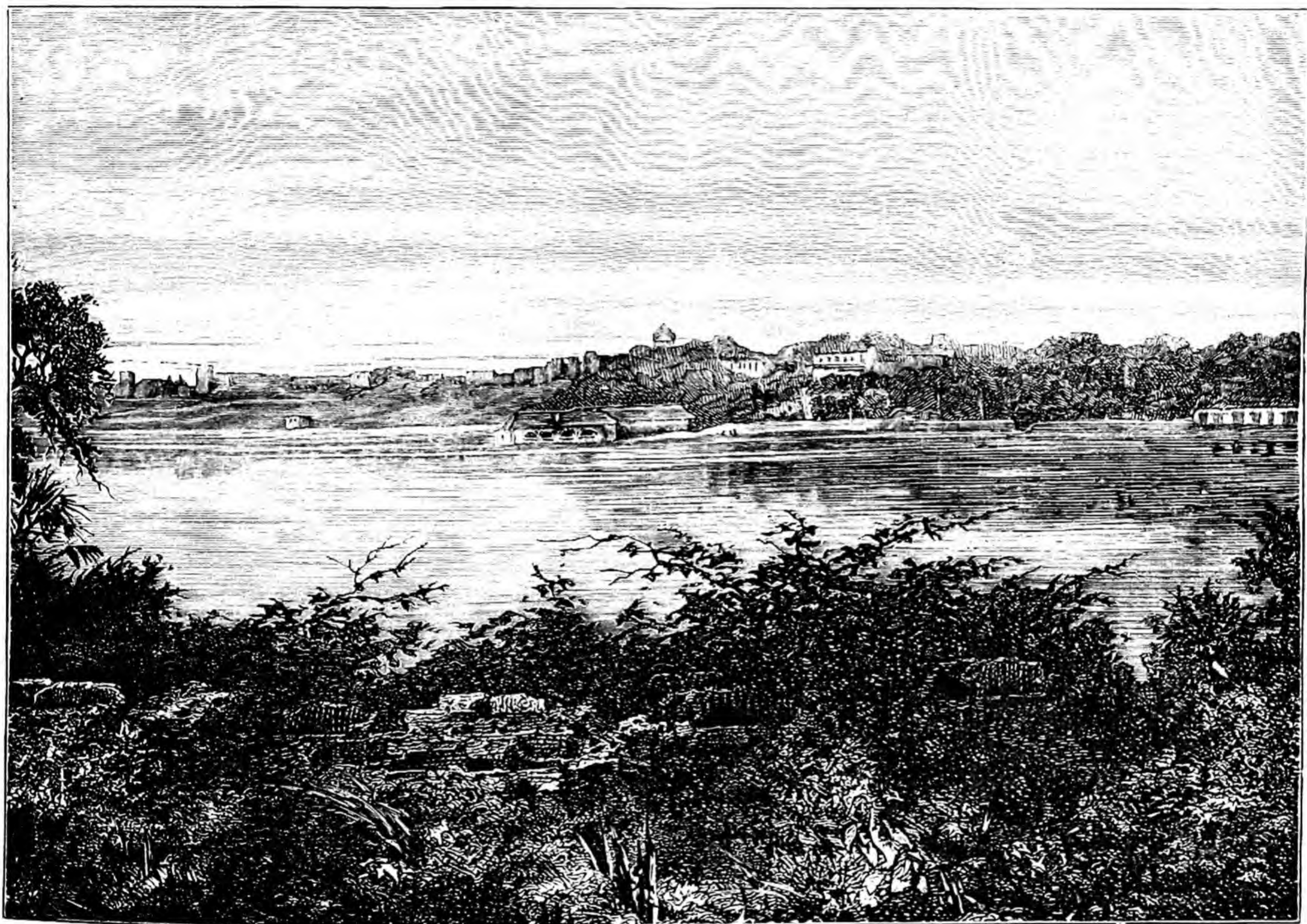
#### MEDIATISED AND MINOR CHIEFS.

Mr. Aitchison\* classes the tenures of the guaranteed chiefs into two great classes – these chiefs in the administration of whose affairs the interference of the feudal

\* "Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India," quoted in Malleson: "Native States," p. 352.



superior is excluded by the express terms of the guarantee, and those chiefs whose "sunnuds" contain no such stipulation. Among other regulations under which the latter come is that they are not to have the power of life and death. These mediatised chiefs must submit all trials for "heinous offences and all sentences of death, transportation, or imprisonment for life to the local officer of the British Government." To name all these mediatised and quashed petty kingdoms would be tedious, and not very profitable. In



BHOPAL, VIEW TAKEN FROM JEHANGHIRABAD.

Central India and Malwa there are, for example, *Rajahs* of Rutlam, Sillana, Alerajpore, Jhabua, Bukhtgurb, Narwar, Sheopore, and Khangurb; *Thakurs*, that is, lords or hereditary landowners, of Piploda, Jamasca, Naolana, Sheogurb, Dabri, Bichrod, Narwar, Salgurb, Piplia, Naogong, Dutana, Ajraoda, Dhulatia, Biloda, Mooltan, Kachi Baroda, Baisola, or Dotra, Khaltoun, Ragwgarh Burra, Sillani and Bukhtgurb Pithari, Bagli, Karodia, Tonk, Patharea, Singhana, Bai, Ragugarh, Kaytha, Khursi Jhalaria Phungat, Agra Burkhera, Dubla Dhir, Duria Kheri, Kumalpore, Dubla Ghosi, Khursia, Jhalera, and Kakurkheri; *Chiefs* of Punth Piploda, Sirsi, Chota Kusrawul, Dhungong, Mayne, Dhawra Kanjara, Bhoja Kheri, Basonda, Nursingarh, and Jabria Bhil; *Raos* of Kalukhera, Burdia,



and Hirapore; *Bhumias*\* of Nunkhera or Tirla, Kolà Burkhera, or Sorepore, Mota Burkhera, Kali Bauri, Barudpoora, Jamnia, or Dabir, Rajgurb, and Ghurri, or Bhysa Kheri; a *Turris* of Junti, whose revenue is about £190 per annum; a *Dewan* of Khilchipore, who for the right of ruling a population of 35,000 pays tribute to Scindia; and a *Jaghirdar* of Sutatea, who leases twelve villages from the Rawut of Rajgurb. Now, though these rulers are styled petty—and many of them are so—yet were it not for the fact that they are feudatories of other princes who have already been named, their territories are in some cases much larger than those of the semi-independent sovereigns. However, there are, in addition, Nawabs of Kurwai and Mahomedgurb, and a Chief of Basonda, who are directly dependent on the British Government. Did space admit of this, a curious chapter might be written on the endlessly varied tenure by which, under the Indian feudal system, these numerous lords hold their sovereignties. They enable India to be governed more cheaply than would otherwise be possible; but cheapness, it is needless to say, is purchased, according to our way of thinking, at the cost of justice to the people. Yet that is perhaps a sentimental grievance, for certainly the villages far in the central region of India seem happy enough, and probably get along more pleasantly with the simple patriarchal system of ancient India than under the more complex and costly *régime* of the British Government. In Bundelkhund there are twenty-four chiefs—whom we need not name—who hold their States as vassals and dependants of the English Government. In Western India there are nine Satura Jaghirdars, whose possessions have been guaranteed by the English Government; two chiefs, descended from old Abyssinian adventurers; and four other States under various administrations. In the Gujerat Peninsula, or Kattywar—which contains 21,000 square miles—there were in former days 137 chiefs tributary to the Peishwa, and 111 to the Gaikwar. Nowadays, though the Gaikwar still retains his tribute, it is collected by the British officials, and with the Peishwa's, which was ceded to England over sixty years ago, amounts to 1,181,140 rupees; and the gross income of the chiefs may be set down at 100,000,000 rupees, collected from 1,475,685 people, though, as no regular census has been taken of these native States, all such estimates must be considered only provisional guesses. In the *Pahlunpore Agency* there are eleven States—four Mohammedan and seven Hindoo—containing a population of 321,645 people, and gross revenues of 640,000 rupees per annum. In the Mahikanta States, with an area of 4,000 miles, and a population of 311,046, there are, in addition to the Rajahs of Idar and Ahmednuggur, a number of semi-independent chiefs, mainly noted as freebooters, and whose engagements with us consist for the most part in more or less fragile promises not to steal. In the Rewa Kanta States there are a number of little plundering proprietors, but there are only six rulers of any consequence; and, with the exception of three, all of them are tributaries of the Gaikwar.

#### SOUTHERN AND EASTERN INDIA.

In this part of the empire the "Tondiman Rajah" who rules Pudukotta is the truest ally of the English, but among a number of smaller subordinate States there are in

\* The Bhumia is a feudal lord who is bound to protect travellers and the villages he has charge of from robbers, and is liable to the payment of pecuniary indemnification to sufferers from crime within his limits.



this country the Jaghirdar of Bangapali and the Rajah of Cananore, who, in addition to his territory now mentioned, holds the Southern Laccadive Islands (p. 176).

In Eastern India the Rajah of Hill Tipperah, though never subjected to the Mogul, receives his investiture from the Mogul's successors. The Kasaa Hill States are twenty-five in number, but with the exception of five, which are semi-independent, they are virtually under the closest subordination to the English Government. In Chota Nagpore, Orissa, Munipore, and Koch Bahar there are a number of small potentates, who exercise more or less absolute sovereignty within their own bounds.

#### NORTH-WESTERN INDIA.

The Nawab of Rampore governs 390,232 people, but the Rajah of Benares is only a nominal chief of the holy city; his authority merely extends over a patrimonial estate of little value, while his revenue consists of the excess above the fixed tribute. The Gurwhal Rajah rules over 200,000 people, while the Shapoorah Rajah holds his territory under the British Government, and the Rana of Oodeypore as joint suzerains. The Cis-Sutlej chiefs of a minor character are eight in number, and in the Delhi territory there are three Mohammedan Nawabs. The Hill States comprise a number of small chiefs, Rajahs, Ranas, and Thakurs, who hold their power on various tenures, but with scarcely an exception they are under bonds to render feudal service to Britain; the Rajah of Bhooj, for example, being bound, "in case of war, to join the British in person, with all his retainers, and to construct roads four yards broad in his territory."\* Altogether, according to the estimate made by Colonel Malleon, the native chiefs command collectively 5,252 guns, 9,390 trained artillerymen, 64,172 cavalry, and 241,063 foot-soldiers—a force too large to be entrusted in the hands of princes on whose fidelity we do not always rely, and indeed have no right to count.

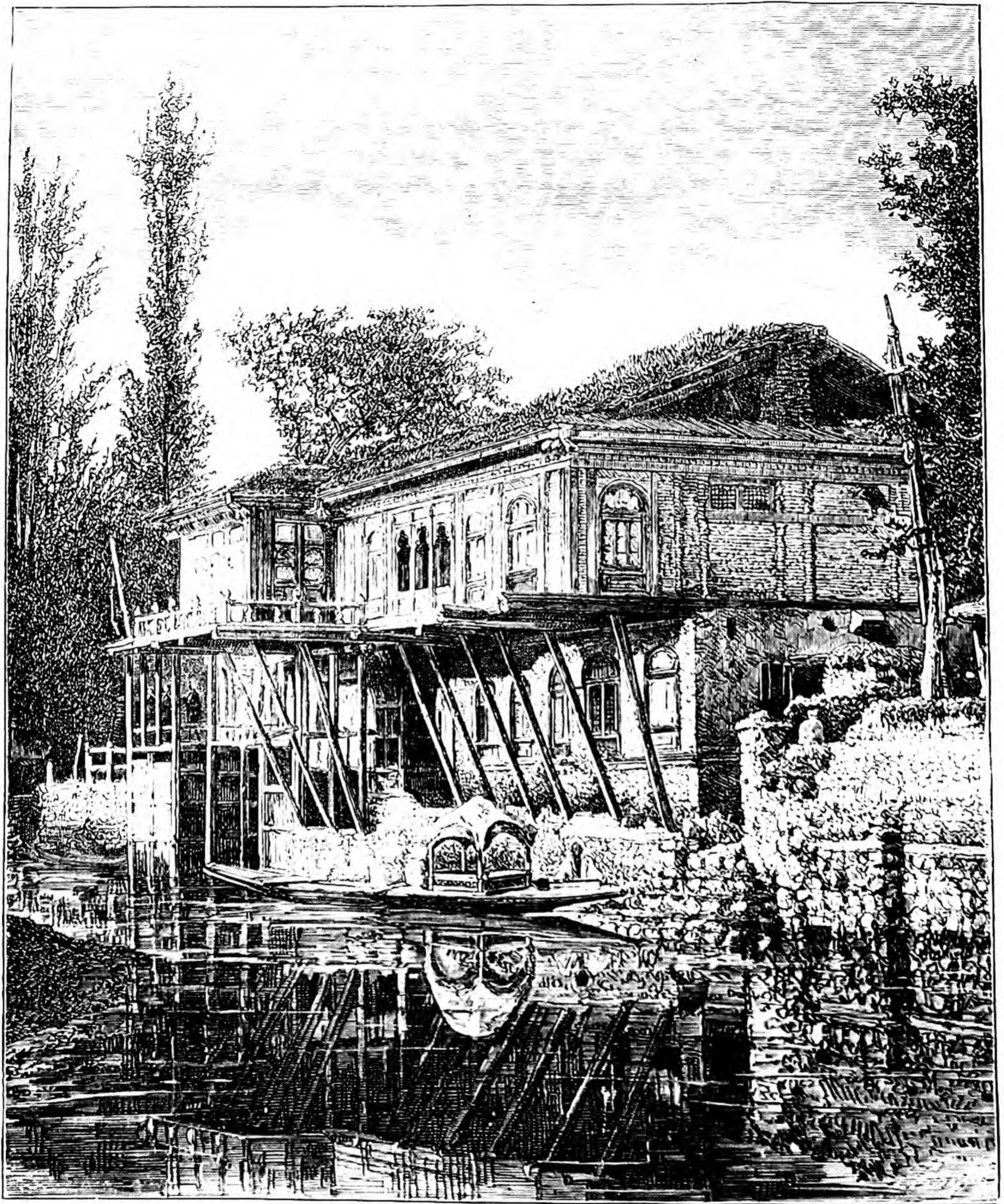
#### FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA.

In the necessarily condensed sketches which we have given it will be seen that, though the greater part of India is ours, *de jure* or *de facto*, there are a number of native princes who exercise more or less independent sovereignty, maintain mimic armies, and in their distant capitals keep up all the outward state of kings, though in reality only the semblance remains to them. But there are other powers who still hold slices of India, remnants of the greater territory they once ruled when the English merchants were only begging in a humble way for a little bit of ground on which to build a factory.

Portugal was the first of the European nations to carry its commerce to India, but by the middle of the eighteenth century the Lusitanian possessions had dwindled down to very insignificant proportions, and nowadays the Viceroy of Dom Louis reigns over a territory only forty miles long and twenty broad. Panjim, or New Goa, is the seat of government; and if a huge palace overlooking a fine harbour could make Portugal an

\* Malleon: "Native States," p. 381.





VIEW IN SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

Indian power, she ought still to hold herself as of some consequence in Hindostan. Old Goa, which was in the Middle Ages a splendid city, swarming with rich merchants and adventurers, and from which, as from a centre, Christianity spread through the



surrounding country, is nowadays little better than a heap of ruins, whose splendid fragments are being gradually removed to build up the city of New Goa, which has now taken away most of its trade also. Goa, however, still attracts visitors, for here, towering above the deserted streets, is a noble cathedral, and a church which contains the shrine of Francis Xavier, the "Apostle of the East," and the ruined monasteries and inquisition which in former days aided in securing by terror what had been won by love. Portuguese influence will long remain in India. The church of Xavier still remains; and the traveller who passes through Southern India will often notice large Christian villages under the palm-trees, and the white chapels which were built by this devoted missionary. But monasteries, churches, palaces, and unused public buildings are about the only remnants of Portugal's former greatness which remain. Diu has also fallen into the general decay, though Daman, with its docks and ship-yards, still keeps up a semblance of life.

The Dutch for a time threatened to be the greatest commercial power in India; but by the beginning of this century their day was over, and now they own not a rood of land in the empire, in which at one time Surat, Balasore, and Chinsura rivalled Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

The Danes, who were also among the pioneers of European trade in the East, retired from the struggle in 1845, when Serampore and Tranquebar passed into the hands of the East India Company, in exchange for a goodly sum of money, which to Denmark was then of more value than the burdensome honour of being a petty Eastern power.

The French came last to the East, but they proved the most formidable of our rivals.\* In 1740 the most powerful European in India was M. Dupleix, Governor of the French possessions. But twenty years later Gallic influence was on the wane; and nowadays Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Mahé, Karikal, and Yanaon on the Orissa coast are the only remains of the empire which the genius of Lally and Dupleix had all but established in the East, and of these Pondicherry alone retains anything like its ancient importance. With the surrounding country, it covers some 113 square miles, in which live a population of 157,000 souls. Its well-built streets, shady boulevards, and peculiarly French-looking buildings give the town a pleasant appearance; but it has no harbour, and its trade is fast declining. Chandernagore, seventeen miles from Calcutta, has also seen its best days. "The Hooghly, which once bore the largest vessels thither, now flows in shallow volume past its lonely quays and grass-grown streets." These settlements, like the others we have mentioned, are, with one exception—namely, Mahé, on the Malabar coast—situated on the coasts of the Bay of Bengal. Altogether the French claim, according to the latest accounts, to govern 275,000 people in India, while the Portuguese sway extends over between 400,000 and 500,000 people, of whom only a small portion are either Portuguese or Eurasians. The same is, of course, also true of the French, and, to a smaller extent, of the English settlements in India. The European goes to the East not to make it his home. He considers himself only a sojourner, to return whence he came after he has acquired sufficient wealth to enable him to pass

\* Malleson: "History of the French in India" (1873).



the rest of his days far from the land in which he won it. Hence India is not—and, in all likelihood, never will be—a colony of Great Britain, but only a black empire dotted with the encampments of her adventurous children.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### INDIA : ITS COMMERCIAL CONDITION.

FROM the earliest period the rumoured wealth of Hindostan must have stimulated the trading avarice of the civilised world. Its natural riches are great, though the splendour of its palaces and princes raise false ideas regarding the actual wealth of its people. After the European nations reached it, there was a rivalry among them as to who should profit most by the new mine opened up. For a time Portugal had the lead; but after the establishment of the East India Company in 1600 England obtained that supremacy which she ever after maintained. "The Company" was, at first, merely an association of merchants having, as was the fashion in those days, the monopoly of trade with "the Indies;" but in time the necessity of defending its commercial establishments from native enemies and foreign rivals forced it to muster armies, and, from being on its defence, to act on the aggressive, until "John Company" became a greater conqueror than even "John Bull," and in due time found itself with the government of an extensive and ever-increasing empire on its hands. The commercial and the political functions of "the Company" did not at all times dovetail into one another; and, as history relates, the desire of gain often compelled the military officials or the merchants to commit acts which no necessity could justify. Up to the year 1836 the Company had the exclusive right of not only governing, but trading with, the country. At an earlier date, a Board of Control had been instituted, in the interest of good government to the people of India; but until the country was opened up to trade, "the Company" were still lords paramount, as, indeed, commercially they continued to be until the country in 1858 passed from their hands into that of the Imperial Government, for whom "the Company" were understood to hold it in trust. The Company, in the old days, when the "pagoda tree" was shaken so successfully by the "factors" and "writers" who, at the cost of a diseased liver and a few years of discomfort, returned with gold mohurs and rupees the amount of which gossip did not require to exaggerate, was managed according to two distinct systems—"by covenanted servants, who received regular pay, and invested the money entrusted to them without making any private profit; and by unsalaried agents, who contracted to supply goods at a certain rate, and might make what they could by the bargain." The first class bore the titles of residents, senior merchants, junior merchants, factors, and sub-factors. Their posts were the most lucrative ones in the service, and attracted the best men. The mere task of governing the people of India was made over to "the boys of the service," who had on occasion to drop the pen and seize the sword.\* But in 1858 even the semblance of the com-

\* Hunter: "Annals of Rural Bengal," p. 349. To this charming work the reader is referred for a most complete account of old East Indian life.



mercial life of the old Company passed away, and India is now open to any one who chooses to seek his fortune there. Of course, the officials are still the chief people in the country. The old feeling has not altogether disappeared, and the "competition wallah" is apt to look on the tea-planter in the hills as an "interloper," while the ancient officials, trained at the old East India Company's College at Haileybury, are not even yet reconciled to the influx of youths with whom the not altogether infallible test of competitive examination has officered the civil service of the country.

#### EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

India has commercial capabilities perfectly unrivalled. It has many climates, and, as we have seen, is capable of growing the products of almost any country. Its people are essentially agriculturists—two-thirds of them being engaged in cultivating the soil—and whenever any political commotion in the rest of the world has stopped the supply of some particular product, India has been found quite capable of meeting the fresh demand. During the Russian war the manufacturers of Europe and America turned to it for the hemp which no longer reached them from the Baltic, and when the American war caused a cotton famine in Europe, the Indian cultivator grew wealthy. Since European enterprise has developed the cultivation of particular products, the "course of trade" has been somewhat altered. For instance, as Sir W. Andrews points out, the extended growth of cotton in West India, and of coffee in the Malabar Coast Districts, has necessitated the importation of grain and sugar from Bengal to supply the wants of the people of those districts. The home trade of India is estimated at about £25,000,000 per annum, and employs coasting vessels to the number of about 15,000. It also includes the carrying of the products of one district to another, and the bartering of their commodities. Its foreign trade is chiefly with Great Britain and China. In 1886—which year may be taken as a fairly average one—the imports of merchandise amounted to £51,811,580, and the exports to £83,827,840, and the trade is gradually increasing. It may be added that the importation of gold and silver shows that in forty years about £300,000,000 of these metals in coin and bullion have been absorbed by the country over what has been exported, so that its riches must in some way be augmenting. This is, however, a fluctuating item in the commercial estimate of India, and the depreciation of silver during recent years has been a still more disturbing factor in the trade intercourse between Asia and Europe. Raw cotton was exported during the height of the American Civil War to the amount of £37,500,000 sterling, though by the year 1869 the export had fallen to the value of nearly £18,500,000 sterling. Of late it has still more dropped off, but it is yet sent abroad to the value of nearly £11,000,000. From time immemorial, cotton-weaving has been one of the staples of India. The beautiful gossamer muslins of Dacca, and the calicoes of Southern India, were famous all over the civilised world when the products of the looms of Europe were but rude imitations of them. In the early days of Indian trade, it was these manufactures, and not the raw material, which was sent across the seas. In every village the weaver pursued his labours, and under the walls of the Residencies weaving



villages spring up all over Bengal. India then not only supplied its own home wants, but had to spare for its neighbours. But the invention of steam machinery and the opening of freights revolutionised the commerce of India, and nowadays England



COTTON OPERATIVES AT DOMBAY.

for the most part imports the cotton and sends it back to India in the woven state. During the height of the cotton famine the starving ryots became prosperous gentlemen, for the first time in their lives independent of usurers, and able to deck out their wives and daughters in costly ornaments of gold and silver. Another revolution is,



however, taking place. India, we have seen, is again beginning to manufacture cotton goods by steam machinery. "It is found," says a recent writer, "that the supple fingers, quick intelligence, and patient habits of the native of India make them the best of mill hands; and bearing in mind the cheapness of their labour as compared with that of Europeans, and the fact that the raw material is at hand, and that there is a ready sale for the goods when made, it is evident this comparatively new industry, or more properly speaking old industry revived in a new form, must rapidly grow; and it is well we should be prepared for its competing with our home manufactures, not only in the Indian markets, but elsewhere." The misery of India is greatly due to its being a country of small farmers, who cultivate little more than can supply their wants of the year, and who are therefore always in imminent danger of famine when a bad season overtakes them. They have not and cannot have any reserve. The establishment of a large manufacturing population will to a great extent render the country independent of drought, and the failure of the earth in consequence to yield its increase. Next to cotton, come jute, rice, flax, and linseed, tea, untanned hides, grain, coffee, opium, timber, indigo, saltpetre, tobacco, seeds, shellac, gums, oils, wool, cocoa-nut and cocoa-nut fibre, and shawls as articles of export; and now that the country is intersected by 13,000 miles of railway, under a proper system, there seems nothing to prevent India prospering far beyond its wont, and finally extricating itself from that financial Slough of Despond into which it rapidly sunk ever since the cheap paternal government of the East India Company was superseded by the juster but more costly one of the Crown.

THE OPIUM POPPY (*Papaver somniferum*).

## REVENUE, ETC.

The Indian budget is always a sore subject with financiers, and since it has proved possible for the estimates to be so framed that a mistake of four millions sterling is capable



of being made in them, confidence has not increased in the manner in which the public accounts of Hindostan are kept. However, to take the figures as we find them, the revenue in 1885-6 was £74,164,197 and the expenditure £77,265,923; so that to meet this deficit of £2,801,726 more taxes must be imposed or the cost of governing must be largely diminished. Of the different parts of India, Bengal, the regions directly under the Governor-General, and Bombay pay by far the greatest part, and of the three main sources of income—the land-tax, opium, and salt—the first yields over £22,500,000, the second more than £8,912,000, and the third, which has been recently raised, about £6,315,000. Before the Mutiny the land-tax yielded fully one-half of “the Company’s” revenue, and it still supplies two-fifths of the funds to defray the ever-increasing expenses of the Government, and the numerous forms in which it is exacted constitute one of the most complicated departments of the Indian publicist’s studies.\* Public works, railways, and canals, produce over £14,000,000 gross profit yearly.

The poppy cultivation (p. 261) is a Government monopoly. In Bengal it can only be grown in order to sell the juice which exudes from its incised pods to the Government officials, by whom it is sent to the factories at Patna and Ghazepore, where it is made up into the commercial form, and despatched to Calcutta to be sold to the merchants by auction. In Madras the poppy is not cultivated, and in Bombay the revenue is derived from that made from the plant grown in the native States of Malwa and Guzerat.

The Indian army is the heaviest item in the Indian expenditure. In 1887 there were upwards of 74,000 European soldiers in the country, in addition to 135,000 native sepoys, the whole maintained at a cost not much under £20,100,000. There is now no special Indian navy, the war-ships on the coast being those of the Royal Navy. The Indian national debt amounts to over £167,000,000, if all the outstanding obligations of the Government are to be included, and as we write a fresh loan—now becoming a financial “regular”—is announced. The coin circulating in the country is chiefly silver. There was coined in the year 1886 £81,361 worth of copper, but the gold circulating medium is comparatively small, not so much as £1,506 having been coined in 1886, though there are also over £15,000,000 of paper notes in circulation.

Such is a brief sketch of the great empire which was won for us by the valour, the diplomacy, and—justice cannot deny—occasionally by the knavery of our ancestors. Its rule is one of the heaviest responsibilities which have fallen to the lot of the Englishmen of this age. It is no light task to govern it to-day: the duty will prove no easier as time passes away, and unless the future becomes pleasanter than it seems at present likely to be, only an optimist can look forward to the twentieth century with a light heart. These are, however, speculations outside the limits of a work such as this. We deal with facts alone, and even did space admit of a discussion of the prospects of India, its government and polity, it would be manifestly improper to

\* Carnegie: “Notes on the Land Tenures and Revenue Assessments of Upper India” (1874); Grant-Duff: “Notes of an Indian Journey” (1876); Kaye: “The Administration of the East India Company” (1853); Smith: “The Geography of British India, Political and Physical” (1882); Prichard: “British Rule in India from 1859-1868” (1869); Routledge: “English Rule and Native Opinion in India” (1875); Chunder Dutt: “India, Past and Present” (1880); Hunter: “The Indian Empire” (1886); Cotton: “India” (1883); Birdwood: “Industrial Arts of India” (1887); &c.



occupy our pages with the consideration of questions so debatable and so debated, and around which parties and partisans are ever surging in the weary war of words. A more interesting topic would be the social life—not of the natives of India, for this we have briefly considered elsewhere—but of the European Colonies, or rather encampments, in that country. This would, however, occupy more space than we can bestow,\* while the railways, telegraphs, canals, tanks, and other institutions of the country must rest with the brief notice they have already casually received in our rapid passage over the Empire. We now visit the border lands of India, and from them travel across Asia through the countries which have not been already noticed on our journey eastward.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### INDIA: ITS NEIGHBOURS.

On the outskirts of India lie a number of States which have not yet fallen actually under the control of Calcutta, though, as we shall see, year by year the power of their rulers is decaying, and in time, even without any desire on our part, the sub-Himalayan and neighbouring States will either become part and parcel of the great Empire in their immediate vicinity, or slide into a condition very similar to that of Cashmere and Hyderabad. Meantime, however, they are independent, and it is evident that so long as they continue unaggressive it is for our interest that they should continue "sovereign powers." A nest of hornets may be unpleasant, even when the hum of the insects is only heard at a distance, and without it presaging any immediate annoyance; a prudent man would, however, prefer not to transfer the colony into his back garden.

### NEPAUL.

For 500 miles along the base of the Himalayas overlooking Rohilcund, Oudh, and Northern Bengal, lies the kingdom of Nepaul, or Nepal, peopled mainly by a race of Tibetan origin, though mixed with them are Chinese, Hindoo, and other elements. The scenery of the country is fine—fertile valleys with snowy mountains, "an Indian Switzerland without its lakes." In the valleys most of the inhabitants dwell, and by the banks of the Gogra, Gunduck, and Coosy, which are tributaries of the Ganges, are fairly cultivated tracts of land. Khatmandoo, the capital, is situated on the banks of a small stream; its population has been estimated to number 50,000, but as the

\* Murray's "Handbooks" of Bombay and Madras; "Life in the Mofussil," by an ex-Bengal Civilian; "Sleepy Sketches from Bombay;" "Rural Life in Bengal;" Sterndale: "Camp Life on the Saptura Range;" Malleon: "Recreations of an Indian Official;" Inglis ("Maori"): "Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier;" "The Travels of Sir Ali Babi, K.C.B." (Aberigh—Mackay); MacLeod's "Peep at India;" Yule: "Hobson Jobson" (for Anglo-Indian vernacular); Papers by Sir William Hunter in *Fraser's Magazine*, December, 1879, &c. &c., in addition to the profuse crop of Anglo-Indian novels for local colouring.



only Englishman allowed to enter the country is the British Resident at the Rajah's Court the population of the capital and country can only be guessed at. The Nepaulese have a prejudice against us, and not unreasonably. Early in this century an English resident lived in Khatmandoo, but the encroachment of the mountaineers on British territory resulted in a war which compelled the Ghoorka Government to cede part of their territory and in other ways acknowledge the English their superiors. For many years Sir Jung Bahadur, who was nominally Prime Minister, in reality ruled the country. This fierce adventurer had the good sense to know that the British were the most powerful race in India, and whatever might have been his



SIR JUNG BAHADUR.

private opinion he took good care to act on his public one. Hence, when the Mutiny broke out he sided with us, and ever after was rewarded with broad ribbons and other dignities, including the proprietorship of certain forest lands on the borders of Oudh. His brother, who succeeded him, was murdered in 1855. He in his turn was succeeded by Dir Shumsheer, but if the report that the Rajah (who is a minor) inclines to recognise the Emperor of China as his suzerain be true,\* ministerial wisdom is not hereditary in Khatmandoo. Nepaul is not naturally a rich country, though nearly as large as England, and the isolated character of its valleys has made the tribes living in them almost independent of each other. It has, however, the most varied of climates, and is capable of producing the most varied of crops. Timber, rice, ginger, and honey, along with hides, copper, iron, and

brass utensils, form the chief materials of trade; but Nepaul is as yet a practically unopened country, our information in regard to it being fragmentary and often very imperfect.†

#### SIKKIM AND BHOTAN.

Sikkim is a little State which divides Nepaul from Bhotan. Its chief has close relations with the English Government, since his territory in the Tista Valley is under a British guarantee, and his district of Darjeeling is British-governed in return for an annuity of a few hundred pounds.‡ Bhotan, east of Sikkim, and north of the Valley of Assam, is a little-known region, its people, like those of the two States already named, being Buddhists, ruled by a Deb Rajah, or temporal sovereign, and a Dharma Rajah, or spiritual ruler, and the country is overrun by idle priests, who plunder the wretched cultivators of the little which they raise. The physical features of the region are,

\* In the middle of last century the invasion of Tibet by the Ghoorkas brought on them the vengeance of China, and, it is said, forced the Rajah to recognise the supremacy of Peking, a recognition still kept up by an Embassy sent every five years to the Emperor's Court.

† Hodgson: "Trade of Nepaul" (Records of Bengal, No. XXVII.), &c.

‡ Hooker: "Himalayan Journals" (1853).



however, magnificent. Its rugged mountains in lofty and picturesque grandeur are unequalled. The traveller, in almost any part of the country, is ever faced with immense precipices, hills clothed to their very summits with trees, dark deep glens,



PALACE OF THE RAJAH OF NEPAUL.

and the high tops of mountains lost in the clouds. Such a country, as might be expected, is traversed by many rivers and cataracts, which, forcing their way through the passes in the mountains, eventually form themselves into the Brahmapootra. Captain Turner mentions one torrent which falls over so great a height that it is nearly



dissipated in mid-air, and looks like a jet of steam from boiling water. Materially, the Bhotanese are a fine people, though dirty in their habits and persons. Their food consists of meat, chiefly pork, rice, turnips, barley meal, and tea, with *chong* distilled from barley and mullet, and *marra*, a beer made from fermented mullet. But though the agriculturists are industrious, the unsettled state of their country and the insecurity of property paralyse their efforts. In 1861 the population was reckoned at only 20,000, or about one to each square mile. Allowing, however, that this estimate is under the truth, as we believe it is, it is evident that the country is scarcely peopled, and it is equally certain that the inhabitants are poor and oppressed. What the British Envoy wrote in 1861 applies with equal truth in the present day: "Nothing," he said, "that a Bhotanese possesses is his own; he is at all times liable to lose it if it attracts the cupidity of any one more powerful than himself. The lower classes, whether villagers or public servants, are little better than the slaves of higher officials. In regard to them no rights of property are recognised, and they have at once to surrender anything that is demanded of them. There never was, I fancy, a country in which the doctrine of 'might is right' formed more completely the whole and sole law and custom of the land than it does in Bhotan. No official receives a salary; he has certain districts made over to him, and he may get what he can out of them; a certain portion of his gains he is compelled to send to the Darbar, and the more he extorts and the more he sends to his superior the longer his tenure of office is likely to be." Captain Pemberton declares that in all his experience of the Indian frontier he never met with a race so degraded as the Bhotanese, the degradation being the result, he considers, of a system which eliminates from the man all that is human, and leaves behind only what he shares in common with the beast. The land is in many places fertile and capable of yielding varied crops. But as the taxes increase in proportion to the amount of soil cultivated, the Bhotanese tries not to increase the extent of his terrace farm on the hill-side, but to make it yield twice as much as the officials estimate it capable of yielding, and of course of being taxed for. The forests supply, among other trees, beech, ash, yew, birch, maple, and cypress, while at different elevations on the mountains are found firs, pines, oaks, and rhododendrons. The cinnamon tree also grows wild, but it is not applied to any economic purpose. Tigers, leopards, with deer, elephants in great numbers, rhinoceroses, bears, pheasants, jungle fowls, and other game animals are found, and Bhotan has the distinction of nurturing a kind of horse peculiar to it. This is the *Tangan*, so called from being a native of Tangastan, the Indian name for the collection of mountain States which we have been describing. The manufactures of the country are poor, and nearly all intended for home consumption, little trade being carried on between Bhotan and neighbouring countries. The climate is very varied and trying. Owing to the irregular surface of the country, different parts experience widely dissimilar temperatures at the same moment. Punakha is the winter residence of the Rajahs, and though at that season the inhabitants are often afraid of exposing themselves to the scorching suns, the people of Ghassa are being chilled by the rigour of perpetual frosts. Torrents of rain visit some parts, and terrible storms often devastate the country far and near. Tassisudon is the capital, and here, though the rains are frequent, they are



moderate in comparison with those of other parts of the country, and at worst are considered mild by those familiar with the tropical deluges endured by the inhabitants of Lower Bengal. With the Bhotanese we have comparatively little diplomatic intercourse. In early times they had to be frequently chastised for their raids into our territory, but up to the date of the conquest of Assam they gave little trouble. In 1863, however, they made inroads into the Dewars, or tracts of low land lying at the foot of the mountain passes, plundering, murdering, and carrying into captivity many British subjects. Remonstrance proving of no avail, the envoy sent being even treated with gross insults, and compelled by threats of death to sign a treaty giving over much disputed territory, and making other concessions to Bhotan, a war ensued, which ended in the Bhotanese surrendering much territory and liberating the kidnapped British subjects. Since that date the two Rajahs have behaved reasonably well, and as their revenue consisted for the most part in the taxes levied on the annexed territory, they receive an annual subsidy from the Indian Government, of which, to all intents and purposes, they are suzerains.

To the east of Bhotan, and in the highlands round the north-east frontier of Assam, are a number of wild, lawless tribes of whom we know very little, except that they have more than once proved troublesome to us. They are descendants of the Tartar conquerors of that part of India, and were never subjugated by the Great Mogul. Though many of them are in religion either Hindoos or Mohammedans, yet the majority are still Pagans, inhabiting rude huts erected on scaffolds, in the most inaccessible depths of the jungle which covers their native hills. These Abors, Duflas, Mishmis, Singphos, Kamptis, and so forth (p. 226) are prone to raid across the border, but by the combined aid of a little money and a great deal of firmness they are kept in tolerable subjection, though every now and again, as the Indian newspapers inform the outside world, our troops have to teach them the sharp lesson which has been often learned by the other races of Hindostan.

#### BELOOCHISTAN.

The Beloochees and Afghans inhabit that portion of the great Persian Plateau which runs in the shape of mountains, with bare sterile deserts, and narrow valleys and gorges, west and south from the Hindoo Koosh Range. The country is poor and rugged, "yielding," as the people declare themselves, "nothing but men and stones." The latter are for the most part devoid of metals or other materials of value, while the former, as unhappily we know to our cost, are brave, in spite of their ignorance, suspicion, and fanatical hatred of Europeans, who in their eyes are endowed with the double objectionability of being at once foreigners and Christians. This region has, however, a political importance entirely out of proportion to its fertility and economic resources. It is, with the exception of the road to Candahar, and the paths constructed for the passage of our invading armies in Afghanistan, practically without highways deserving the name, but its position between the two great Asiatic powers



—Great Britain and Russia—both of whom are year by year approaching closer to each other, renders it a territory not likely to be less eagerly contested for as years roll past. The Bolan Pass to Quetta in Beloochistan—now actually British ground, the Khan of Kelat, who nominally governs the country, having ceded to the English the right of garrisoning that pass—and the Khyber, which is the highway to Cabul, and is likely to remain British territory, have been with justice styled the north-western gates of India.

Beloochistan is a territory larger than Great Britain, and is for the most part a sandy plateau, unwatered by regular rivers, though traversed by torrents during the rainy season, enclosed between ranges of mountains, which on one side mark the boundary of Sindh, and on the other descend in pastoral terraces to the low-lying district of Mekran, by the shores of the Arabian Sea. Thus while the upper regions of Beloochistan

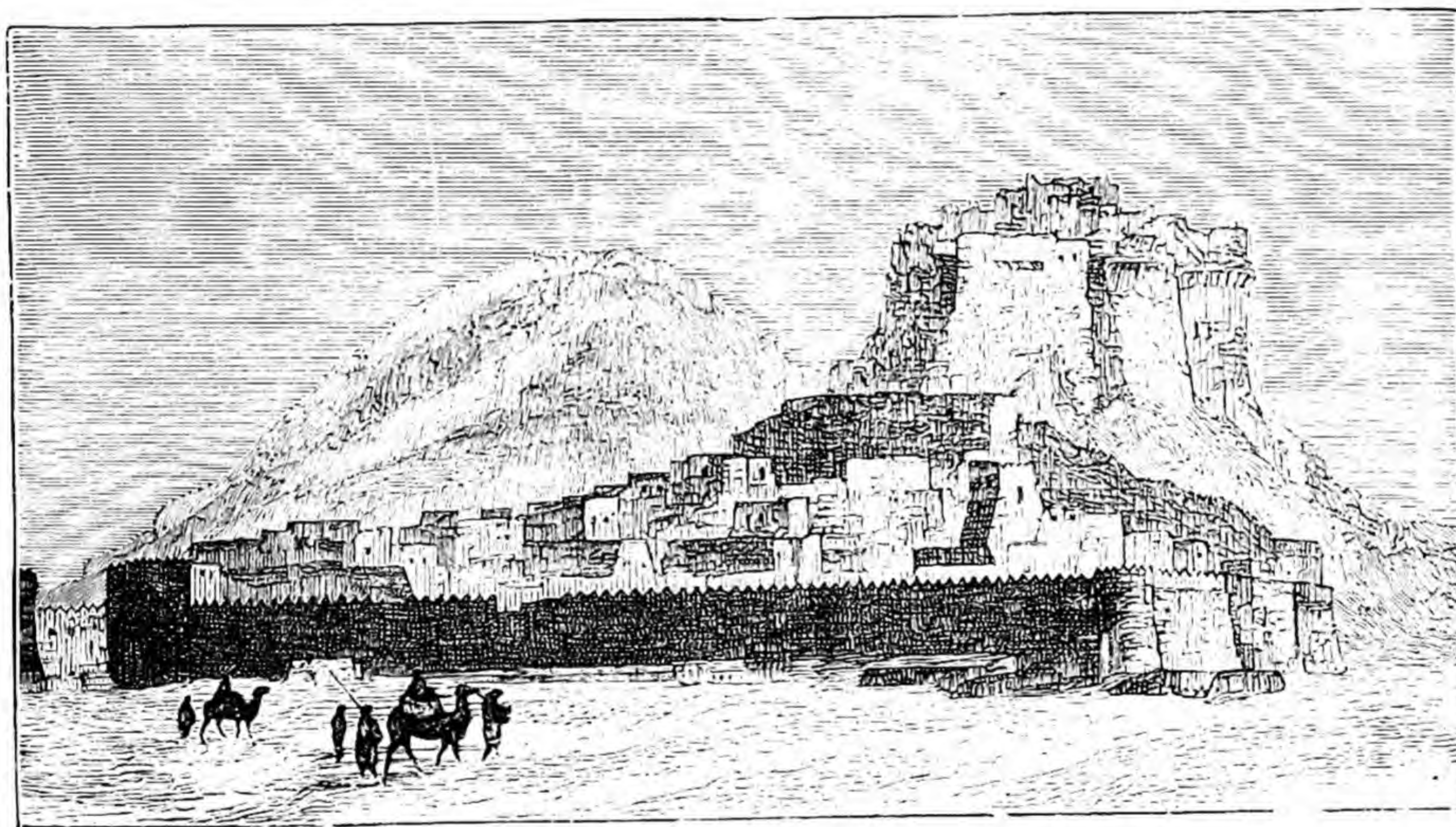


THE BOLAN PASS.

are cold and uninhabitable in the winter and hot in the summer, Mekran is for some months in the year one of the most furnace-like parts of the whole world. The Cutch-Gundava, in the north-east, is, however, a fertile and pleasant district; but though the coast extends for 600 miles, there is no good harbour in its whole extent, the roadsteads of Soumeance Bay, Homara, and Gwadar being about the best holding grounds along the shores of the Arabian Sea. The country cannot, however, be characterised as an extremely poor one. Gold, silver, lead, antimony, iron, tin, and various other metals and mineral substances are found in more or less abundance, and although most of the land is stony, the Province of Cutch-Gundava, if properly cultivated, is alone capable of rearing all the grain required by the population. But there are few parts of Beloochistan which do not yield some crops. Of the numerous Indian cereals there is raised a sufficiency, vegetables are abundant, and the gardens of Kelat, the capital, produce a profusion of temperate and sub-tropical fruits, and the Beloochistan indigo is reported to be superior to that of Bengal. Cotton and madder are grown, and in the hot region of Mekran



the date culture is an important industry. Kelat is a town of about 3,700 houses, reared on the edge of a plain some 5,540 feet above the sea. The houses are mostly built of sun-dried brick, or of wood plastered over with mud. The walls and bastions are also of mud, and though sufficient to defend it against an uprising of the native tribes, would be valueless against artillery planted on the hills which command it on all sides. The streets are broader than is usual, the bazaar is large and well supplied, and though the town is not remarkable for greater sanitary appliances than most other Eastern cities, it has the redeeming quality of being well supplied with excellent water, derived from a spring which, arising in a hill, meanders through the centre of the town. Its water has this peculiarity—that before sunrise it is rather tepid, but immediately on the heat of the day setting in, the waters at their issue from the smaller springs become exceedingly



KELAT.

cold, and so remain until next morning. The population of Beloochistan is made up mainly of the Beloochees and the Brahuis. The latter are, however, the dominant race, and from them the rulers are always selected. Indeed, such is the marked distinction between them that when the Khan assembles the tribesmen for war the Brahuis demand of their right rations of wheaten bread, the Beloochees having meantime to be content with flour made from the coarse grain known as jowar (p. 198). The number of the people it is, however, difficult to ascertain. The area of the country, according to the boundaries fixed by the commission under Sir F. Goldsmid, is about 106,500 square miles, while the tribesmen may be estimated at 500,000, this number including the Persian colony called Dehwars, and the Hindoos long settled on the Brahui mountains. The population is, however, divided up into a multiplicity of tribes, who, like those of Afghanistan, do not readily brook a master. Indeed, the fluctuation of power is such that, though the Khan of Kelat is nominally the ruler of the country, he is often not much more influential beyond the range of his matchlocks than is Abdur Rahman, Ameer of



Cabul, over "the tribes" supposed to be his liegemen. The Sirdars, or tribal chiefs, though owing military service to the Khan, and recognising him as a final court of appeal, in reality exercise supreme control within their own districts, and the Khan has long ago allowed his right of vetoing the election of a tribal head to fall into abeyance. The revenue of the Khan, derived mainly from his profits as proprietor of lands and towns, from taxes paid by the foreign cultivators settled in the country, from customs dues, and from irregular extortions, is believed not to exceed £30,000 per annum. Hence, when he goes to war he is compelled, like his brother sovereign in Afghanistan, to ask assistance of the tribes, and to submit with what grace he is capable of to the refusal which his request not unfrequently meets. These irregular levies are, however, brave and ferocious. They fight chiefly on foot, horses not being convenient in so mountainous a country, and camels are used solely by the western tribes in their predatory excursions. Sir William Andrews has very happily described the relations of the Khan of Kelat to his subordinate chiefs, when he describes him as only one of many petty tribal headmen, who wields among his neighbours a kind of lordship as unstable as that which the earlier Kings of France exercised over the Dukes of Burgundy and other powerful vassals of their day.

#### AFGHANISTAN.

This other kingdom of the great sea of mountains between India and the plains of Central Asia has for us ever had an even greater interest than Beloochistan. With its rulers the English have several times been compelled to go to war, and it was only in 1880 that our last campaign with Shere Ali, his son Yakooob Khan, and the masterless men who spasmodically continued to struggle after the death of the one and the deposition of the other, ended in a permanent settlement by the elevation of Abdur Rahman, Shere Ali's nephew, to the vacant "musnud." It is even a more rugged country than Beloochistan, and in size is nearly as large as the Punjab, Oudh, and the North-western Provinces together. The Suliman Mountains separate it from India proper, and across its northern parts project spurs of the Hindoo Koosh. Afghanistan is nowadays peopled by a peculiar people, whose features are decidedly Hebrew, though whether they are actually Semitic is likely ever to remain an open question. They themselves assert their Jewish origin; but their traditions prove nothing, and are moreover of very recent date. It is, however, certain that mingled with the original stock are many Aryan elements—that is, people of the same origin as the Hindoos and most European nations—in addition to a large admixture of Persians and other races living in their immediate vicinity.\* Be the Afghans' origin what it may, the most casual reader of the current history of the last few years does not require to be told that they are among the fiercest and most intractable people with whom we have ever come into collision. Poor and stony as Afghanistan is, from the earliest times it has been the prey of successive conquerors. The soldiers of Alexander the Great colonised Balkh, on the confines of the Amu Daryia or Oxus, and to this day traces of this ancient Greek settlement of Bactria are ever and anon dug up. From Persia and Turkestan later conquerors, from the days

\* Bellew: "The Races of Afghanistan" (1880).



of Mahmoud of Ghuzni and Mahomed Ghorî, have in later times seized Afghanistan as their prize, and from its mountain fastnesses have swept down on the rich plains of India, while the events of the last half-century are too well known to be narrated afresh.

The area of the country is greater than that of France, but four-fifths of its surface are covered with a confused mass of mountains and valleys, which may be described as in general diverging from the central knot of the Pamir to the more level deserts of the Persian plateau. The great range of the Hindoo Koosh extends along its northern border, and beyond the Haji-Gak Pass is continued westward under the name of the Koh-i-Baba, Safed-Koh, and other ranges, until they form the northern edge of the Persian plateau, and meet the Elburz Range south of the Caspian. On the side nearest to India, the Suliman Range bars the way East, and between the two great boundary mountain barriers lie many well-watered and fertile valleys, as well as "high, cold, treeless, pastoral table-lands, which merge to the south-west into the bare deserts of Beloochistan and Eastern Persia." The country, as a whole, is well watered, though the rivers which intersect it do not in every case add much to the fertility of the arid country through which they flow but do not irrigate. They are formed, not by rainfall, but by the melting of the mountain snows, and hence are inconstant, and partially valueless to the agriculturist. However, in many cases these waters are drawn off into canals for irrigating purposes. Hence the Dehas is spent in reviving the soil of Balkh, the Nari or Sangalak in irrigating the vicinity of Andkhui, and the fine stream of the Murghab is exhausted in making Merv the oasis of Eastern Central Asia. The country varies much in different parts. Cabul (p. 272), for example, presents a splendid panorama of lofty, pine-clad, snow-capped mountains, enclosing luxuriant valleys and glens, watered in every direction by numberless mountain streams, and profusely rich in vegetable productions, including a variety of fruits and cereals.\* Again, in other parts of the country there are low ranges of rocky hills skirting sand or gravelly plateaux, either in themselves arid wastes or which end in genuine deserts. In such a region cultivation is mainly confined to the vicinity of the natural or artificial watercourses, and pastoral operations, for which the country is more suited, are only available during the winter and spring seasons, and then for the most part only on the hills. These elevations are usually either treeless, or only covered with a sparse growth of stunted shrubs or diminutive firs, but they furnish food for the flocks of various nomad tribes, who in their elevated recesses find pasture for their flocks, and a refuge from the terrible heat of the plains, or shut-in valleys, the temperature of which during the summer months is akin to that of a furnace. The climate is equally varied—so varied, indeed, as to deserve the description which the Emperor Baber gave of it nearly 400 years ago, when he characterised Afghanistan as a country in which, at one day's journey from Cabul, you may find a place where the snow never falls, and at two hours' journey a place where the snow almost never melts. For instance, at Cabul and Ghuzni the winter is usually very severe, though the summer heats are tempered by cool breezes from the adjacent snow-clad mountains. At Candahar and the south-western portions of the country the winter is comparatively mild. Snow falls but rarely, and even then

\* Bellew: "Journal of a Mission to Afghanistan," p. 6.



it lies but for a short time. In Cabul and Ghuzni the temperature is also mitigated by the influence of the south-east monsoon, which, after blowing over Hindostan, exhausts itself in this portion of Afghanistan in clouds and occasional showers. In the eastern part of the country, in the direction of the region known as Khorassan, the



THE BALA HISSAR AND CITY OF CABUL, FROM THE UPPER PART OF THE CITADEL

hot winds, laden with dense clouds of dust, render life almost insupportable. The high temperature is farther increased by radiation from the "bare rocks and a dry sandy soil, whilst the country unreached by the influence of the monsoon is not favoured with any regular supplies of rain to cool the air or to moisten the parched ground." We have spoken of the rivers of Afghanistan. These are not many, and of small calibre. The great evaporation in such a dry climate, as well as the continual tapping to which they are subjected also, decrease their volume to such an extent that, with the exception



of the Helmund, almost all of them become exhausted long before they have run their course. A large quantity of their water is also absorbed by the porous soil over which the streams flow. Even the Lake of Seistan, which receives the waters of six rivers, presents during the summer months almost a dry surface over a considerable portion of its extent.\* But after the heavy rains on the hills which the streams feeding it drain, Dr. Bellew remarks that they become flushed for a time, and sometimes overflow their banks as does the Seistan Lake. But owing to the rapid absorption by the soil, and the evaporation caused by the arid atmosphere of this region, the inconvenience produced by these inundations is but temporary, and of no great importance. This is true of Western Afghanistan. But in Cabul the rivers are more numerous and of greater value than in the drier parts of the country. In the winter the streets of the city of Cabul are usually blockaded with snow for three months in the year, and then all business comes to an end. At Jelalabad, lower down in the same valley, there is less snow, but in the summer the heat is terrible, and greatly detracts from the healthiness of the climate, due to the prevalence of the dry, bracing winds in the uplands. Afghanistan has always been more or less of a closed country—an oyster which at intervals has been opened with the sword. Nomad merchants, like the Lohani traders, have from time immemorial wandered through it, but the jealousy of the authorities has for many years prevented almost any one save soldiers at the heads of armies or diplomatists under special permits—and these, as we all know, not invariably—from entering the country. Yet curiosity or other causes have led men to risk their lives in the attempt to penetrate the sterile valleys of Cabul. Arminius Vambéry got as far as Herat, not, however, without being suspected, and then wisely turned back. Political spies—both Russian and English—have more than once been in it, unknown to the authorities. But the strangest of all wanderers who ever reached Cabul in modern times was Wilhelm Friedrich Yapûrt, a German, who appeared in Candahar in 1857, when Major Lumsden's mission was there. He was a native of Berlin, but had roamed for twenty years through half of Asia and Turkey as quack doctor, herbalist, and shoemaker, until he had reached Herat. Here he was cruelly treated, and several times led out to have his throat cut as an infidel, and only escaped on producing positive proof that, outwardly at least, he had conformed to Mohammedanism. He travelled from Herat to Candahar on foot, taking six months to accomplish the journey, and suffering hardships almost too terrible to think of. He was then on his way to Bombay, but finally changed his mind and determined to remain in Candahar. This, however, he was not destined to do; for when news of him reached Dost Mahomed, who was then Ameer, he was ordered to go to Cabul for inspection. What became of him the Englishmen could never learn, but when the Sipahis of their guard heard of his destination they merely stroked their beards and gravely remarked, "May Allah have mercy upon him!" He was suspected of being an English spy, for the Afghans know nothing of the Germans. To them Feringhistan is simply the land of the Feringhees—"a white-faced, pig-eating race of infidels,

\* Rawlinson: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLIII. (1873), p. 272; Markham: *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1880), p. 198



very fond of eating and fighting and stealing each other's lands." But long before poor Wilhelm Yapturt wandered to his death a Briton had found his way to Cabul. When the first English army wintered in that city, they were often puzzled by an inscription on a tombstone in the Mohammedan cemetery, which recorded that—"Here lyeth the body of John Hicks, son of Thomas and Edith Hicks, who departed this life the eleventh of October, 1666." Who was John Hicks? who carved his tombstone? and what did he in Cabul in the days when Aurungzebe was Great Mogul, and the second Charles King of England?

The invasions of 1838, 1842, 1878, and 1879 have, however, greatly extended our knowledge of the country, albeit this is still imperfect, while the once scanty literature of Afghanistan has, owing to these campaigns, assumed formidable proportions. The newspaper accounts of the country would alone fill many volumes, and this has been so generally read that a briefer account of the region will now suffice than would have been otherwise necessary.\* The country is believed, in spite of the Afghan assertion to the contrary, to be rich in mines. Ores of lead and iron, as well as silver and metallic antimony, are known to abound in the Hindoo Koosh and its subordinate ranges, and it is a commercial fact that sulphur and orpiment are brought from the Hazareh mountains, and salt from Kalabagh and Seistan, at opposite extremities of the country. In the latter district sal-ammonia and alum are found, and saltpetre is plentiful in various districts. The coal of Candahar is likely before long to become of importance, and the existence of gold in the neighbourhood of the capital of that country has been known for a number of years. The silver mines of the Panjshir Valley in the Hindoo Koosh were at one time famous, and the excellent iron produced from magnetic iron-sand in the independent territory of Bajour, north-west from Peshawur, is still exported. From Permul considerable quantities are brought into Cabul, and iron ore is abundant in many parts of the country, but copper, though known to exist, is nowhere worked. The silicate of zinc, which comes in nodular masses from the Kakar country, is chiefly used by the cutlers for polishing, while the native manufacturers of gunpowder are supplied with sulphur and saltpetre from deposits found in various districts.

The vegetable productions of Afghanistan are similar to those of India and Europe, with a few, such as pistacia and edible pine nuts, madder and assafoetida, more peculiar to itself. The tobacco of Candahar is highly esteemed both in and out of the country. Cotton is grown in small quantities, but in addition to the usual crops suitable to the climate of different parts of the country, large quantities of apples, pears, almonds, apricots, quinces, plums, cherries, pomegranates, limes, citrons, grapes, figs, and mulberries are reared to a degree of perfection to which they have attained nowhere else in the East. In their fresh and dried state the Afghan fruits are carried all over Hindostan, and in value exceed the trade in

\* In the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* for 1879 and 1880 will be found notes on the chief works and reports published of late years. The standard treatises of Elphinstone, Ferrier, Bellew, James, Raverty, Kaye, Macgregor, Lumsden, and Thornton, are always valuable; and in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. I. (1879), pp. 38, 110, 161, 191, 244, and 617, and Vol. II. (1880), pp. 212 and 424, will be found abstracts of most of the geographical work accomplished by the survey officers attached to the armies of occupation or invasion. The Reports of the Afghan Boundary Commission (1885-7) should be consulted.



horses and sheep's wool, which form the other considerable portions of the foreign commerce of Afghanistan. In return for their fruits, wool, and horses, the Lohani merchants (p. 239) take back indigo, muslins, chintz, broad-cloths, sugar, spices, medicine, salt, silk and cotton fabrics, musk, and other British and Indian manufactures and products. But of manufactures proper the Afghans have few or none. They are a nation of warriors and shepherds, not of art-workmen, miners, or handicraftsmen. They make coarse cloth for their own use, turbans, felts, "postins," or sheepskin coats, and camels-hair cloaks, or "chogas," the three latter articles being extensively exported to the Peshawur frontier, and the adjoining portion of the Punjab, where they are valued—especially the postins—by the British Indian army, as a part of their winter clothing. The domestic animals of the country are the horse, the sheep, and the camel. The great droves of the first-named animal which are so largely exported to India come for the most part from the West of Afghanistan, but of late years greater care has been bestowed on the breeding of the horse in Afghanistan itself, with the result that a superior class of beast is now reaching the market. The camel and the "yabu," as the short, stout-limbed, hardy indigenous horse is called, are the only beasts of burden used throughout the country, or employed in the transport trade with the Punjab and Sindh, on the east and south, Persia on the west, and Turkestan on the north. Horses, camels, and sheep also constitute the wealth of the nomad tribes, though they have cows, buffaloes, goats, poultry, long-haired Persian cats, and several varieties of dogs, when settled for a time on their farms. The sheep are all of the fat-tailed variety, and are remarkable for the profusion of wool which their fleeces bear, and out of which the "postins" are made. The ass is not common in the country, but is a finer animal than that of Hindostan; but in the Western district are found a wild ass and also a wild goat and wild sheep. Mutton constitutes the chief animal food of the people, but the flesh eaten is that of the white-fleeced variety, the wool of which is also exported both to Persia and by way of Bombay to Europe. In the autumn large numbers of sheep, oxen, and even camels, are slaughtered, their flesh rubbed with salt, and sun-dried for winter provisions. Herat is so much more Persian than Afghan in its characteristics that it cannot be taken as a fair specimen of the country. Hence the fine carpets woven in that town and district may be considered a Persian manufacture naturalised here, while the fine rosaries of chrysolite, which are made at Candahar and largely exported to Mecca and other strongholds of Mohammedanism, are an art product peculiar to that city. The rivers of Afghanistan do not abound in fish, nor is very varied sport to be had by the capture of the species which they do contain. The "mashir" (a barbel), and other trout-like fishes, are those most commonly obtained and esteemed by the enthusiastic angler. Reptiles, including some very venomous snakes, are abundant, and birds are numerous. The Afghans are fond of field sports, and accordingly several of the native falcons have been trained to strike at water-fowl, bustards, partridge, quail, and all other sorts of game. They have even been taught to tackle the rusine deer, by perching on its horns and buffeting its head with their wings, thus delaying its speed, so as to permit of the greyhounds coming up with it. Falconry is, indeed, the Afghan's favourite amusement, and the sport has been brought to the greatest perfection;



but deer-stalking in the open plains, the driving of game to well-known points by a host of beaters, and wild-fowl shooting with decoys, are among the other Afghan field-sports noticed by Colonel Yule. As horsemen, the Afghans hold the palm among the Asiatic races, and are unerring marksmen with the native rifle, or "jezail," and though sullen and incredibly treacherous to strangers, among themselves they are reported to be—when not shooting each other—convivial and humorous. Afghan gatherings are frequent, and tilting, racing, and music vary on such occasions the somewhat monotonous murder which characterises the intercourse of so many of the tribes.\*

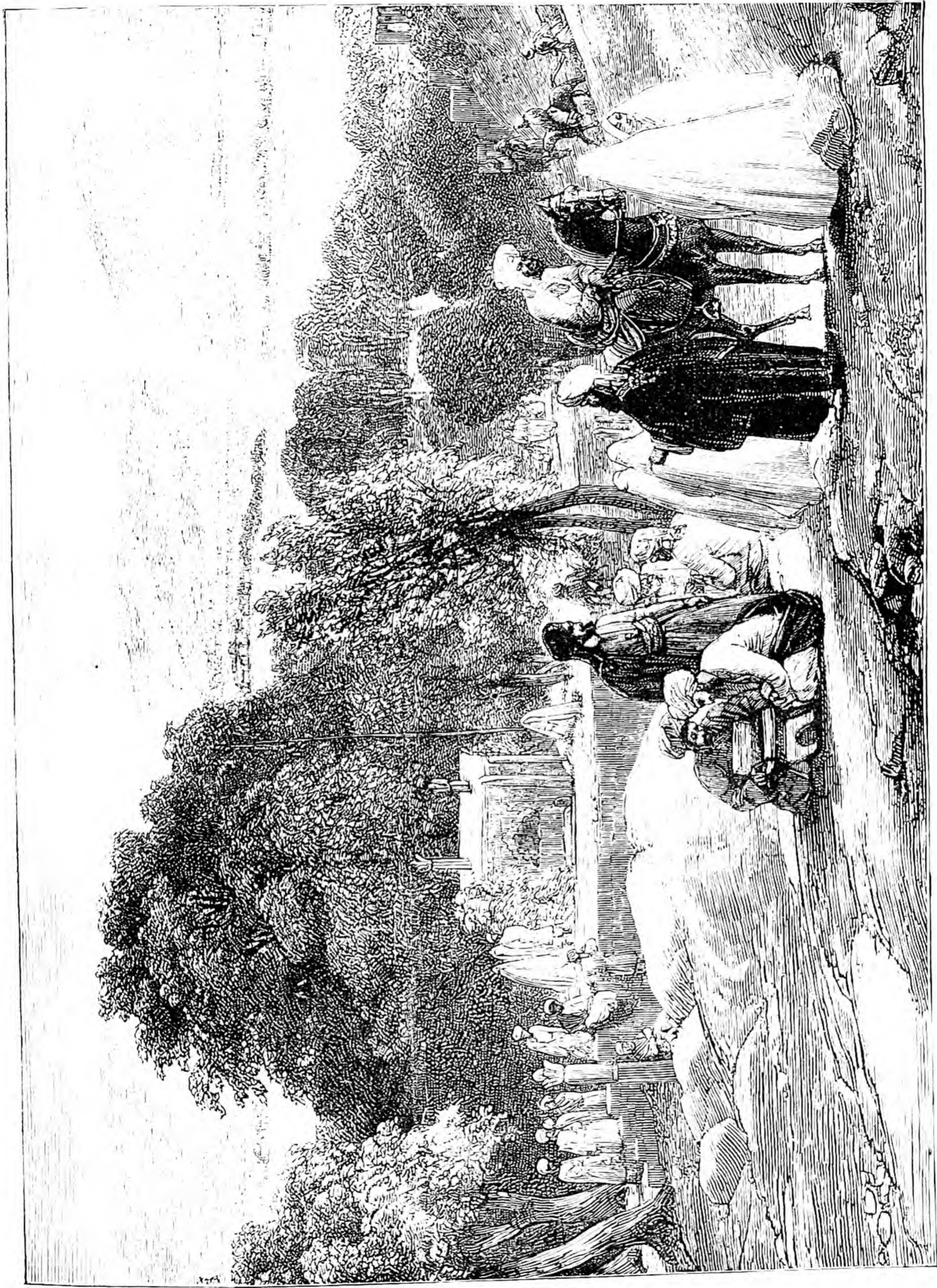
The population of Afghanistan—including Afghan Turkestan and the country of the Chitralis and Kafirs—may be roughly estimated at 4,200,000, but in reality we know very little about the number of people inhabiting some of the more out-of-the-way parts; and of the places deserving the name of towns only Cabul, Ghuzni, Candahar, Herat, and Bamian need be mentioned.

Cabul—situated 6,400 feet above the sea-level, that is, 5,235 feet higher than Peshawur—is not an imposing city, though pleasantly surrounded by orchards and gardens. Its entrances are commanded by almost perpendicular and fortified eminences, and on the south-west side, at the base of Baber Badshah, a small hill, is the tomb of the Emperor Baber (p. 277), the founder of the Mogul dynasty in India, but who does not, in his delightful memoirs, speak in very complimentary terms of the place where his ashes were to repose. The Bala Hissar, or Upper Castle, commands the town on the east and south-east side; while a girdle of bastioned wall shuts in the fort, the palaces of the Ameer and his officials, a barrack, and a bazaar. The great glory of Cabul used to be its immense stone-vaulted bazaar. This is, however, a thing of the past, for in 1842 the "Army of Vengeance" destroyed it, on account of the body of our first murdered envoy having been exposed in it. Its successor is nevertheless still crowded with traders, and may be described as an Afghan Shikarpore, only in the Cabul market Central Asia rather more predominates than in the Sindhian one. Ghuzni, eighty-five miles south-west of it, standing on a rock 280 feet above the surrounding plain, and over 7,700 feet above the sea, is a notable fortress, protected by walls and towers, though it has more than once been stormed by the British troops. Before the twelfth century it was the capital of the Ghuznevide kings, a Turkish dynasty who at the height of their power ruled the enormous expanse of country stretching between the Tigris and the Ganges, and between the Jaxartes, or Syr Darya on the north, to the Indian Ocean. Candahar—in the upper basin of the Helmund, the capital of the Province, District, or Waliat of Candahar—is a populous town, 3,190 feet above the sea, and the great meeting-place of the traders between Persia and India. Soon to be connected with the Indus valley by a railway,† it promises to become a place of great prosperity, and to all intents and purposes Anglo-Indian. Herat is of even more importance, for it is considered by many strategists to be the "Key of India," a distinction which it owes to its position, at the point whence radiate the great lines of communication to Seistan, Candahar, Cabul,

\* An account of the Afghans is also given in "The Peoples of the World," Vol. III., pp. 254-275.

† For a description of this railway, see Sir R. Temple, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. II. (1880), as well as the exhaustive paper of General Sir M. A. Biddulph in the same volume, pp. 212-246.





THE TOMB OF THE EMPEROR BABER AT CABUL.



Bokhara, Khiva (*viâ* Merv), and to the westward by four different routes to as many important Persian cities. In addition to its central position, the richness of the plain on which it is built, owing to the fine system of irrigating canals from the Herirud River, has from early times attracted population both to the city and the numerous villages scattered over the plain. So fertile is Herat that, though many of the canals have been allowed to fall into ruin, the country still produces grain far in advance of the wants of its settled inhabitants. Sir Henry Rawlinson describes the city as forming a quadrangle of nearly a mile square, protected by walls and a citadel of sun-dried brick on a high artificial mound. But what distinguishes Herat from other Oriental cities, and at the same time constitutes its chief defence, are the stupendous earthworks on which the city wall is built. This pile averages 250 feet in width at the base, and about 50 in height, and as it is crowned by a wall 25 feet high and 14 feet thick at the base, supported by about 150 semicircular towers, and is farther defended by a ditch 45 feet wide and 16 feet deep, it presents an imposing appearance, though in spite of recent additions to the fortifications, it is the opinion of experienced engineers that the place could not hold out against a European army for thirty days. The wall is unprotected by flanking defences, and as the city is dominated from the rising ground at the north-east angle, and the water supplying both the ditch and the town could be cut off by an enemy holding the outside city, it could soon be starved or forced into subjection, the wells and reservoirs inside the walls being unequal to the wants of the inhabitants. Herat is nevertheless a very strong place. It has stood repeated sieges, and in 1837 beat off for ten continuous months a Persian army of 35,000 regular troops, supported by fifty pieces of artillery, and in many cases—we have Sir Henry Rawlinson's authority for the statement—commanded by Russian officers. It is therefore thought that, though at present weak according to modern ideas of strength, with the expenditure of a little money and some engineering skill it could be made one of the least pregnable places in Asia. The population of the city is very fluctuating. It has contained as many as 100,000 inhabitants, but by war and neglect the population has dwindled away until at the present moment it does not number more than about 22,000 souls. There are, indeed, tales of a time when a million and a half of traders and warriors assembled within its walls. If so the city must have been vastly larger than it is at present: but it is always well to treat with discreet scepticism the statements of Oriental historians regarding the magnitude of their cities and the magnificence of their kings. The immense mass of ruins, broken pottery, crumbling walls, decayed bricks, and earthen mounds scattered over the plain of Herat point, however, to a period when the "Granary of Asia" was a city of infinitely greater magnificence than at present, and some of the ancient palatial buildings yet remain to attest, even in their decadence, the former grandeur of Herat. For instance, the mosque of Mosulla is described by General Ferrier as still, in spite of its falling into decay, one of the most imposing structures of the kind in Asia. The beautiful blue and gilt tiles, and the texts from the Koran which appear over the arches, Captain Marsh\* considers in their execution simply marvellous. The tomb of

\* "A Ride Through Islam" (1877), p. 141.



Abdullah Ansari, a Mussulman saint, the numerous marble mausoleums of the Princes of the House of Timur, and various Royal buildings, are also well worthy of notice.

The population of the city and neighbourhood is of a very mixed character. Originally Aryan, they have in time got mixed with Turco-Tartaric elements, and are inferior to the broad-featured, flat-faced tribes, who, from the dawn of history, have held the mountains from Cabul to Herat. The history of Herat is really the history of the East, every dynastic revolution, or foreign invasion, or civil war in Central Asia, having more or less centred about that city. In 1838 the Heratees beat off a Persian army; in 1857 they became independent, but in 1863 they became again incorporated with the Afghan monarchy, with which sixty years earlier they were conjoined. At present they are nominally subject to Cabul, but in reality, owing to the internal troubles of that kingdom, the Heratees are practically their own masters. The trade of Herat, we may add, is subject to fluctuations. It can feed a large population over its regular residents; its mountains abound in minerals; its silk manufactures are, or ought to be, flourishing; and the carpets of Herat are famous all over the East. The net revenue of the province is said, in ordinary times, to be about £100,000 per annum, but in the course of the endless civil wars and invasions to which it has been subjected, Herat has become practically a desert. Under a stable government it is capable of being what it once was—as it practically still is—the “Garden of the East,” and the “Granary of Asia.”\* Bamian, beyond the Haji-Gak Pass, is chiefly remarkable for its architectural remains and primitive cave dwellings still occupied as houses. Jelalabad, 97 miles from Cabul—which is again 183 from Peshawur, and 307 from Candahar—is placed at a height of 1,946 feet, in the middle of a plain, well watered and covered with villages, forts, and gardens. The town itself is small, and, though embosomed in gardens, is of a rather poor character. The chief events in its history are the siege which Sir Robert Sale sustained within its walls from November, 1841, till April, 1842, and its occupation during the recent war. Charikar and Istalif are larger towns. Kelat-i-Ghilzai is a fortress of some importance. Girishk is a fort with an insignificant village about it. Farrah, a place of great antiquity, is surrounded by a huge earthen rampart, but otherwise consists of only a few half-ruined houses, the vicissitudes which the town has undergone having all but ruined it. Zarni, in the little-known country of Ghur, to the east of Herat, is more remarkable for its ruins than for anything else. It may be added that the Akhond of Swat, a semi-religious, semi-political potentate, has also in this land of many chiefs a territory,† and the awe which his mysterious character imposes is all-powerful. The late Akhond, who died in 1877, was a man of the fiercest fanaticism; but of his successor little is known, and less cared, though in all likelihood he is secretly exercising influence more important for evil than many of the chiefs whose names are prominently before the public.

The future of Afghanistan it is difficult to presage with anything short of pessimism. More than seventy years ago one of the chiefs told Mountstuart Elphinstone, when he urged

\* Malleon: “Herat” (1880); Yate: “Travels with the Afghan Boundary Commission” (1887).

† *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1880), p. 434; Leitner: “Kohistan;” Mezüköverd: “Kohistan” (1872), &c.



the advantages of quiet and security under a strong king, "We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood; but we will never be content with a master." Since those days we have had abundant experience of the Afghans, but nothing has transpired which leads us to question the soundness of this estimate of the people, with whose affairs the Anglo Indian Government—unhappily for us, and not very fortunately for them—has had so frequently to deal.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### AFGHAN TURKESTAN AND THE OTHER CENTRAL ASIATIC STATES.

FAR west, in the basin of the Oxus, are several provinces usually considered subject to the Ameer of Cabul, and hence, owing to the country here and for far around having originally been under the control of Khans of Turkish origin, it is known as Afghan Turkestan, the final syllable "stan," which occurs in the name of so many Eastern countries, signifying simply "country." The river Oxus flows through the greater part of Central Asia, and finally debouches, in the midst of swamps, into the Sea of Aral, though there exist strong grounds for believing that at one period—but whether in historical or in geological times opinions differ—it reached the Caspian, and of late years strenuous efforts have been made by the Russian authorities to divert it into its old channel, which can still be traced, and so supply direct water communication through the heart of Asia, from the territories of the Czar to the border of Afghanistan.

### AFGHAN TURKESTAN.

Badakhshan, in the valley of one of the tributaries of the Oxus, famous for its rice, wheat, horses, cattle, camels, sapphires, rubies, and lapis-lazuli, is one of the most easterly of these little States of the Hindoo Koosh. Its capital is a series of small hamlets called Jirm and Faizabad. But the Badakhshees are in reality not an urban but an agricultural people, and do not therefore herd much in towns. The country has been much subject to civil wars and invasions, and is at present nominally under the rule of the Ameer of Cabul, though the chiefs of the sixteen districts of which it consists in reality are independent, and only pay tribute and do military service to the Meer of Faizabad, who in his turn pays—or paid—tribute to the Afghan monarch.

Wakhan, higher up the valley of the Oxus, is in its turn tributary to Badakhshan, and being too far removed from the turmoil of the surrounding countries to be much troubled,





YANGI HESAR AT THE FOOT OF THE FAMILIAR CHAIN.



is fairly prosperous and inhabited by a fine race fond of arms and sports, and deriving a considerable profit from the transit trade which passes between Eastern and Western Turkestan along the Oxus Valley, and over the Pamir Steppe. The slave trade is, however, also one of the sources of wealth. So abundant, indeed, are the captives which they kidnap either from the neighbouring principalities, or from the Kafir country, that a strong man is considered a fair equivalent for a good dog or horse, while a stout girl will be readily bartered for four horses.\*

Kunduz, at one time an independent Khanate, is also now tributary to Afghanistan. The capital of the same name is a small mud town, in the midst of gardens, orchards, and cornfields cultivated by Uzbeks, a Mongolian race, and Tadjiks, a people of Persian origin.

Khulm was another Khanate which fell under Afghan control. Its old capital was embosomed amid orchards famous for their productiveness; but the site of the town exposing it to inroads from the wild Uzbek horsemen, it was transferred to its present site—four miles south—where it consists of “a cheerless group of villages, comprised of mud houses with domed roofs, connected by gardens enclosed by a mud wall.” It contains about 15,000 people, and does a considerable trade. Another of its strongholds is Haibak, which, with its beehive-like houses clustering round a castle on an isolated eminence, presents a rather imposing appearance.

Balkh, the Bactria of the Greeks, is a more important State, lying on the border of the Great Turkoman desert; but nowadays it presents no traces of its ancient civilisation, or even of the prosperity which it possessed in the days when it was the centre of Mohammedan civilisation in Central Asia. The capital, Uem-ul-Bilad (“the mother of cities”), was in those days a large town thirty miles in circuit. The inner town, surrounded by a ruined wall four or five miles in circumference, is now entirely deserted; and but a scanty population occupies the outer city, the bulk of the people now residing in the new capital of Afghan Turkestan, the fortified town of Mazar-i-sherif, eight miles north of the site of old Bactria.

Andkhui, another oasis formed by the termination of a mountain stream, was long an independent Khanate, inhabited by Turkomans, Tadjiks, and Uzbeks; but it is one of the provinces known as the Four Domains, viz., Shibrghan, Maimana, Siripul, and the oasis named. At one time it contained 50,000 inhabitants, but it is now fallen into decay. Maimana, or Maimeyne, is more flourishing. Its people, numbering about 100,000, are Uzbeks, and at one time were notorious slave traders. Siripul has fewer people, the greater number Uzbeks, the rest Hazaras. From the latter Colonel Yule mentions that a tribute of slaves used to be exacted by the dominant race, and Hazara widows were at one time claimed as Government property and sold by auction. The settled population is about 18,000, but there are also many nomads whose tents dot the valley, and who carry on trade with the owners of the fine orchards and cornfields which now occupy a considerable part of it.

\* Yule: “Book of Ser Marco Polo,” Vol. I., p. 1871; Wood: “Journey to the Source of the River Oxus” (Edition of 1873); Montgomerie: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLII., pp. 132 and 180; Yule: *Ibid*, p. 438; Rawlinson: *Ibid*, p. 482, and *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XVII., p. 108; Yule: *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Burslem: “A Peep into Turkestan,” &c.



Akcha was before the Afghan conquest also a petty Khanate, but has now fallen under the rule of the conqueror of the provinces mentioned, the greater number of whom are only partially dependent, and most probably by this time are again shaking off the loose yoke of the Ameer of Cabul's lieutenants.

#### PETTY HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS AND REPUBLICS.

These do not, however, include all the petty States or chieftainships which lie in the secluded valleys of the Hindoo Koosh and neighbouring ranges. But it would be an unfruitful task to simply enumerate the others, none of them being, either singly or combined, of any importance whatever. Wakhsh, Khotl, Darwaz, Roshan, Shignan, and the valley of the Wardodj are all minor sovereignties, which maintain, as they have maintained for ages, a more or less complete autonomy. The latter valley excited the admiration of Captain Wood as he returned from the Black Pamir Steppe. "Everything wore the gorgeous air of spring. The change was delightful. When we passed up, snow lay everywhere. Now the plough was in the field; wild flowers were sparkling among the withered herbage of the bygone year; and around the edges of the stones tufts of young grass were everywhere to be seen. The sheep, let loose from their sheds, were remunerating themselves for the dry and scanty fare of their winter quarters. The streams were all unlocked, and we encamped in the open air. The raven, the jay, the lark, the bulbul, or Badakhshan nightingale, were all on the wing. Numerous insects, too, aroused from their long sleep, began to show themselves. Among them were butterflies, and a most beautiful painted species of gadfly." To finish this idyllic picture, "the fine sward was enamelled with crocuses, daffodils, and snowdrops." This attractive description of one valley of the Hindoo Koosh in spring will apply to most of them. They are, however, often oases in a desert, and at best sheltered glens surrounded by mountains frequently bleak and forbidding in the extreme.

Among the southern spurs of the Hindoo Koosh also live the peculiar people known as Kafirs (that is, infidels) and Siâhpoosh, against whom the Mohammedans repeatedly make slave-hunting raids. They are perhaps survivors of the old Aryans, the stock from whom the Hindoos and the majority of civilised nations are sprung, and may be akin to the people on the Cashmere frontier, whom Major Biddulph, who has been recently examining them, pronounces also to be Aryans. Dr. Bellew considered some of the tribes south-west of Dardistan, though akin to the Dards, also of the same race, though, unlike that people, they have not embraced Mohammedanism. They are usually fair-haired and blue-eyed.\* Chitral, in the upper valley of the Beilam or Kunar River, is an even less-known kingdom. The country is independent, and the people, Dards and Dungars, tall, athletic, but cowardly, and the women said to be coarse and immodest. Chitral and Yassin

\* "The Peoples of the World," Vol. III., pp. 276-286; *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, November 4th. 1859; "Notes on Kafirstan," by Captain Raverty; "Church Missionary Intelligence," 1865; "Church Missionary Gleaner," 1865; also, for an account of the Dards, Drew: "The Northern Barrier of India" (1877), and "The Jummo and Kashmir Territories" (1875); and Bellew: "Kashmir and Kashgar" (1878).



have from time immemorial been under the rule of chiefs who claim descent from Alexander the Great, through the Kings of Khorassan. These rulers, like their people, are bigoted and fanatical to a degree which can only be equalled in Swat. But while

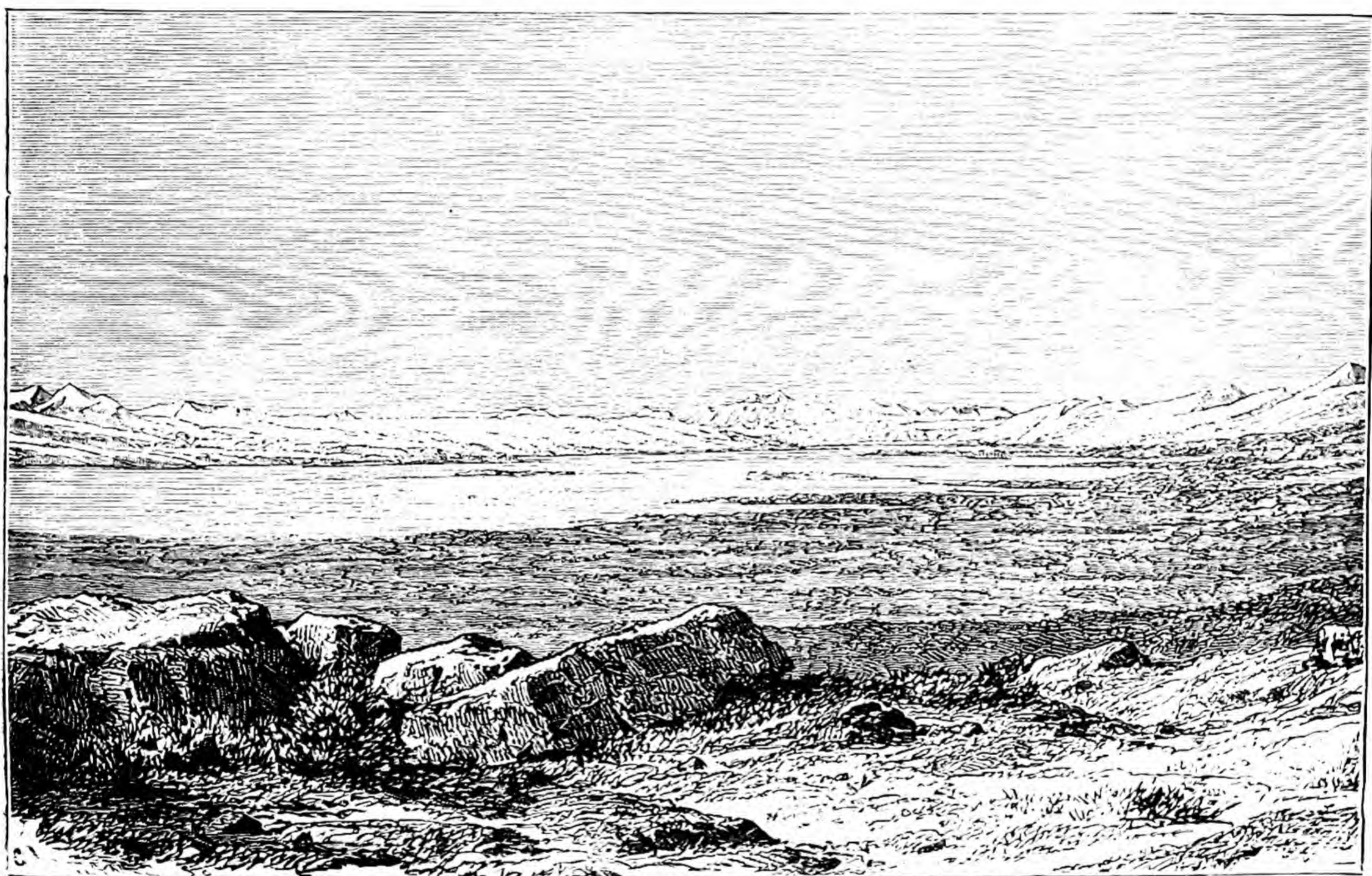


KIRGHIZ SULTAN.

the Swatees recognise their Akhond simply as a spiritual authority, the inhabitants of Chitral and Yassin are as much subject to their rulers as if they were serfs. Gilgit was also, up to about the year 1858, a part of the Yassin territory. But at that date the Maharajah of Cashmere began that series of ruthless, unprovoked hostilities, which



he continued until the valley was almost desolate and his power was established in the Fort, where a British resident now resides. Yassin has also been devastated by the foulest raids, the inhabitants massacred with incredible atrocity, and thousands carried off into slavery, without the British Government evidently being aware that all this was being done by their ally, now an honorary general in our army. Gilgit is about 4,500 feet above the sea, and is one of the three independent States which once lay along the valley of the river of the same name. But Punial is now governed by a Rajah dependent on Cashmere, and Gilgit is directly administered by the Maharajah's officers.



LAKE VICTORIA, PAMIR STEPPE.

Yassin is still independent, and for some time past its ruthless enemy has abstained from troubling it. It is well watered, and yields good crops of the products of mildly temperate countries,\* and even some of the precious metals. In the Chitral country the gallant young explorer, George Hayward, was basely murdered in July, 1870, at the instigation of Mir Wali, on whose friendship he had relied, and whose interests he had endeavoured to advance. In Asia every little valley usually teems with inhabitants, and in the wide regions into which the reader has been introduced almost every glen has its own petty nationality, ruled by its own sovereign, or in some cases even governed on the republican principles so strange to the Asiatic ideas of the relations between man and man. Baltistan is the name, for example, applied to the

\* Drew: "The Northern Barrier of India," p. 159.



mountainous and little-known region which extends for sixty miles by thirty-six in the upper valley of the Indus. The chief town is Skardo, and for a time the country was called Bolor, though, owing to Humboldt and Ritter having transferred the name to an imaginary range of mountains, supposed to be the meridional range of Asia, the name has got inextricably into confusion in geographical nomenclature. The valleys of the Gilgit, Mastûj, and Chitral are governed on the principles of pure despotism, untempered by even a pretence of recognising the rights of the ruled. But in the valleys which lead to the Indus, Mr. Drew tells us that there are republics, free and democratic. Most of them are, indeed, exceedingly petty, that probably being one of the reasons why they have not been thought worth disturbing. Thalîcha, for example, may be characterised as the smallest independent State in the world, for it is simply a little village of seven houses autonomously governed. The Siga, or village parliament, is the legislative assembly which arranges the affairs of these valley republics, and so thoroughly democratic are they, that if even one man of any consequence objects to a particular line of policy his scruples are respected and the assembly adjourns, to meet after the opposition has been overruled, or the proposal so modified as to meet with his approval. If the valley is large then there is usually a parliament for every village, while what is called the Federal or Executive Council of the State consists of the combined Joshteros, dignitaries elected at intervals on the grounds of their reputed wisdom or known wealth. Finally, if the policy is of high moment, there is a "mass meeting" of all the people called, and the policy of the "nation" is decided in accordance with their votes. Mr. Drew thinks that in the republican valleys of the Himalayan spurs there are fewer foreign wars but less internal security; "in the republics personal independence and liberty of action are so much the rule that no one interferes to prevent even violence."

#### THE PAMIR STEPPE.

Crossing the Panja, we reach the village of Langar-Kaish, 10,800 feet above the sea, and stand on the great Pamir table-land. In this region we find a knotted mass of mountains, the converging point of the Thian Shan and of the Karakoram and Kuen Lun chains of the Himalayan range. This mountain-land, between the upper Oxus valley and the basin of Eastern Turkestan, is perhaps even yet one of the least known parts of the world, in spite of the many efforts made of late years by Russian and English officers to explore it.\*

It is as bleak and cheerless a region as Marco Polo described it, and his descriptions have been confirmed by Wood, Gordon, Severtsoff, Oshanin, and its latest explorers, Bonvalot, Capus, and Pepin. It is the spot whence the gathering waters of several rivers flow to different parts of Asia, and where lonely lakes gather the drainage and rainfall which are to fertilise the oases hundreds of miles distant from the sources of the rivers which supply the water to the irrigating canals. The plateau is about 180 miles long and 100 in breadth from east to west. "It con-

\* *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* (1879), pp. 125, 209, 455, &c.; Gordon: "The Roof of the World" (1870); "The Russian Pamir Expedition" (*Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1884, pp. 135-142).



sists," writes Colonel Yule, "chiefly of stretches of tolerably level steppe, broken and divided by low rounded hills, much of it covered with saline exudations, and interspersed with patches of willows and thorny shrubs, and in summer with extensive tracts of grass two or three feet in height, the fattening properties of which have been extolled by travellers, from Marco Polo to Faiz Buksh. Many lakes are scattered over the surface of the plateau, from which streams flow. Wild fowl abound upon the lakes in summer to an extraordinary degree; and in the vicinity water deer of some kind are very numerous, and the great sheep (*Ovis poli*) apparently all over the plateau. In 1869 a murrain among these latter is said to have killed them off in multitudes. A goat called Rang, affording a fine shawl-wool, is found on the steppe; also a kind of lynx, whose fur is valued. Foxes and wolves frequent Pamir; bears and tigers are occasional visitors. The wild yak, according to Faiz Buksh, is also found there; if this be true, Pamir is its west and north limit. Pamir was at one time the summer haunt of a large nomad population of Kirghiz, with their numerous flocks; but the depredations of the Shighnis (regarded also with horror by the Kirghiz as Shiah heretics), and other kidnapping neighbours, are said to have driven them to the eastern valleys, or to the Kokan territory, and the only summer visitors now are about one thousand families, who frequent the shores of Rangkul in Little Pamir." In Moorcroft's time some of these Kirghiz pastured on these lofty grazing lands 30,000 sheep and goats, 500 yaks, and 200 camels. The great height of the plateau renders the air so rarefied as to make respiration difficult. Even this trouble is experienced by the natives, who use dried fruits, garlic, and leeks as antidotes. The plateau is broken by spurs and peaks. But so little is known that it is still a geographical problem whether there is or is not a meridional range on its eastern confines. MM. Severtsoff and Mushketoff—the Russian explorers—are inclined to consider them as extensive highlands covered with a somewhat complicated system of mountain ranges. Mr. Hayward considered that they form a continuous north and south range, while Professor Fedchenko was of opinion that the so-called mountains were only the bluff escarpment of a table-land. Among the lakes, Siri-Kol, Sikandari Kol, or Victoria (p. 285), is one of the largest. It is fourteen miles long and about a mile in breadth, and is bordered on all sides by high hills and even lofty mountains. It is 15,500 feet above the sea, and the source of one of the branches of the Oxus, the other having been traced by the "Mirza"—one of Colonel Montgomerie's native geographical spies—to Pamir Kol, at a height of 13,300 feet. The air is so rarefied that when Captain Wood attempted to break the ice on the lake a few strokes of the pickaxe produced such exhaustion that he and his companions had to lie down to recruit their strength. A musket loaded with blank cartridge sounded as if the charge had been poured into the barrel and neither wads nor ramrod used. Even when ball was introduced, the report, though louder, wanted that sharpness which marks similar discharges in denser atmospheres. Many of the party were dizzy with headache; any sort of muscular exertion soon became very distressing. Conversation it was impossible to keep up, and a run at full speed produced pain in the lungs and prostration that lasted for some hours. The line of perpetual snow is in the Pamir something over 17,000 feet, but by the end of June the ice is broken up, the lakes



covered with aquatic birds, and the country beginning to be covered with that nourishing grass which makes at present, and in former times made it still more, the pastoral paradise of the wandering Kirghiz shepherds.\* It may be added that the Kara-Kol, another of the Pamir lakes, is, like many of the waters of these inland regions of Asia, decreasing. The north-eastern outflow has ceased, though there is one occasionally to the south-west, but not annually, as supposed by General Gordon. The observation of Severtsoff confirms the statement of the old Chinese traveller, Hwen Thsang, and proves Kostenko to have been in error when he declared that it had no discharge.

#### "THE KHANATES."

Had these pages been written a few years ago the number of independent States familiarly known under the title of "the Khanates" would require to have been considerably extended. But of late years the Czar of Russia has, either through circumstances within or beyond his own control, been pushing his conquest from the West towards the East, until at the present moment only fragments of the great empire of Timur Leng and Ghenghiz Khan in Central Asia remain under native rulers. The almost endless wars which the country has been the scene of during late years have also greatly aided our geographical knowledge. It is less than thirty years since Arminius Vambéry succeeded in penetrating the region in the disguise of a dervish, but in the interval scientific explorers and surveyors have passed over the greater part of it, and the literature of Central Asia has assumed proportions so great that it already demands the almost undivided attention of a specialist.† In a former work,‡ somewhat full accounts were given of the people and government, as well as to some extent of the general character of these Khanates, and in a former part of the present volume Khasgar and the Ili valley, with some of the neighbouring Russian territory, were outlined. It is therefore unnecessary to occupy more space in this portion of our travels in Central Asia than is required to sketch the present condition of the Khanates under native and Russian rule, a plan which will suit the patience of the reader and the limits to which we must confine our remarks. The breadth of this territory at its narrowest part was in 1884 about 100 miles, but since then Russia and Afghanistan have become coterminous. The neutral land has been absorbed. The whole area of Independent Turkestan may be taken at 92,000 square miles, containing a scattered population of over 2½ millions, found mainly in a few busy though half-ruinous towns, and in the oases which dot the great sandy deserts which for the most part characterise Central Asia in this direction. In other words, the Khanate of Khiva, excluding that portion which has fallen under Russian control, contains some 700,000 people; Bokhara rather over two millions, and the Principality of Karateghin 100,000;

\* Wood: "A Journey to the Source of the River Oxus" (New Edition, 1873); Hutton: "Central Asia" (1875), &c. &c.

† M. V. J. Mejoy has compiled a catalogue of the works on Central Asia in his library. It comprises 3,000 publications, for the most part in the Russian language.

‡ "The Peoples of the World," Vol. IV., pp. 239-263.



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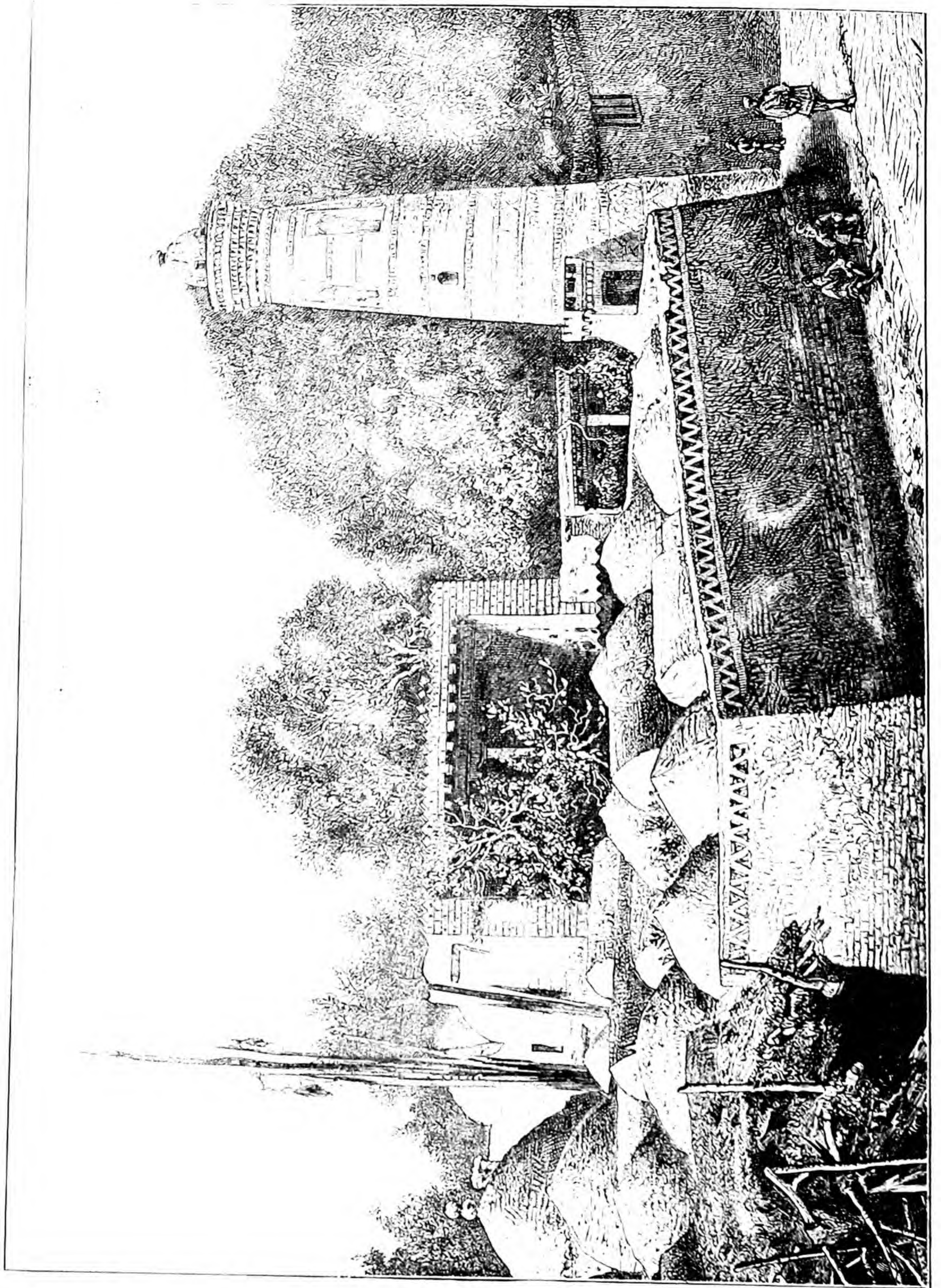
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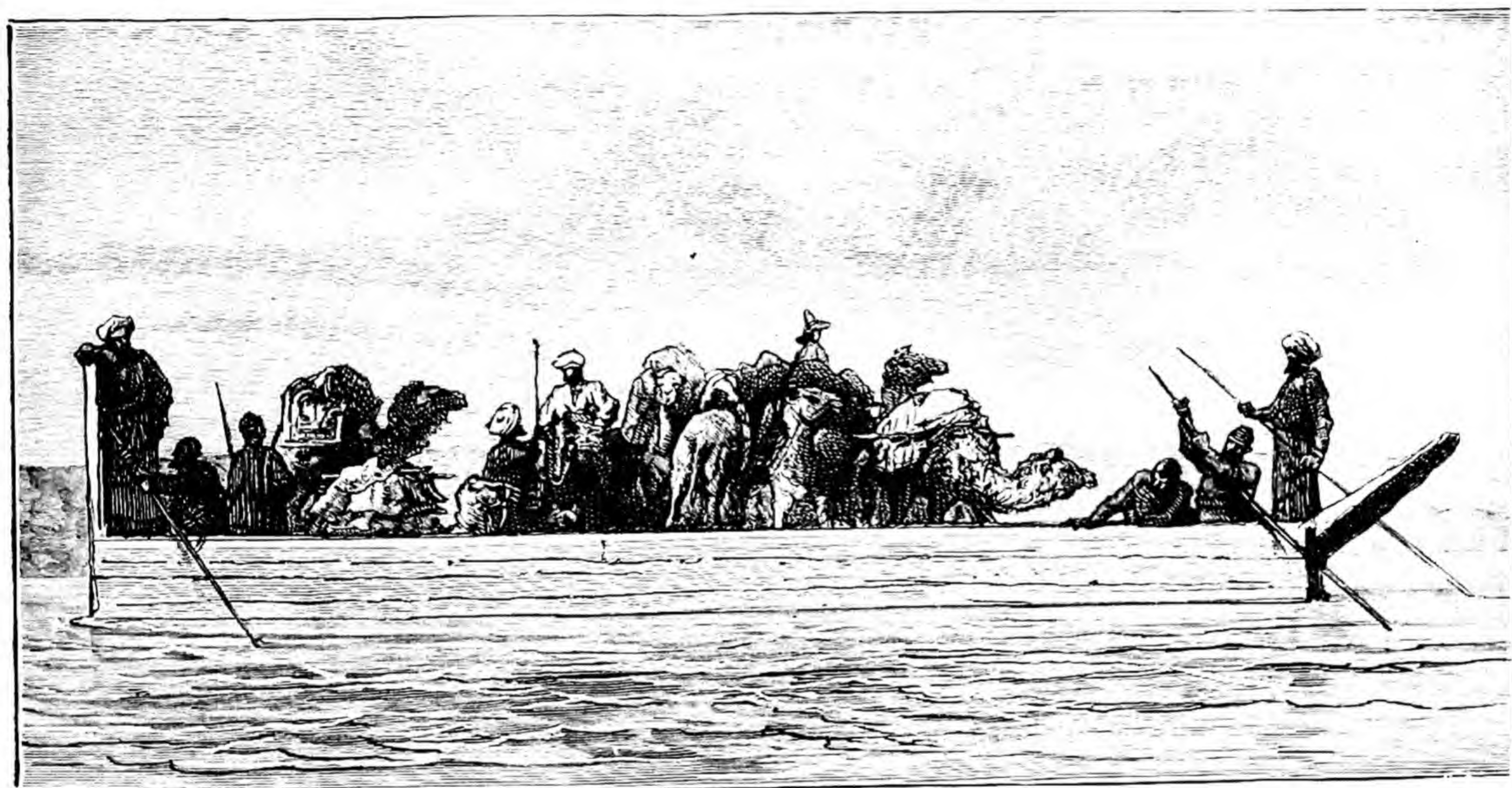




CEMETERY AT KHIVA.



but the Turkoman country about 220,000 is now part of Russia. But these figures are in every case little better than guesses. The only inhabited or fertile part of Khiva is that watered by the irrigating canals along the left bank of the Oxus, not far from where it falls into the Sea of Aral. It yields grain and fruit in abundance, horses and cattle are plentiful, and the people weave cotton and silk from the native silkworms. But the trade of the Khanate is almost entirely in the hands of the Russians, who have a flotilla on the Sea of Aral, and have of late made efforts to make the Amu Darya, or Oxus, navigable on to the borders of Afghanistan.\* The Uzbeks, Turkomans, Kirghiz, and Persians also carry on some commerce by means



CROSSING THE SYR-DARYA.

of camel caravans, which cross the Steppes to Orenburg and Astrakhan, and to Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian, where there is a Russian port through which goods are introduced into the country. But in this we have no share. Trade with Khiva is strictly confined to the subjects of the Czar, whose vassal the Khan is. For the present he still maintains a semblance of authority in the town of Khiva, situated on one of the canals drawn from the Oxus, and which prior to the Russian conquest was one of the most infamous of the Central Asian nests of the slave trade. The greater number of these captives were Persians, either taken in raids by the Turkomans, or obtained directly by the robber clans of the Khiva sovereign. But there were also Russians and Russian subjects among those who had been kidnapped on the shores of the Caspian. This circumstance first brought the Khan into collision with the Czar's troops, and finally led to the invasion of 1872, which lost him

\* Wood: "The Shores of Lake Aral" (1876); Morgan: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLVIII. (1878), p. 301; Wiedemann: *Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*, Berlin, 1888, etc.



all the right bank of the Oxus, and permitted the fatuous prince the enjoyment of the rest simply as the suffragan of the Czar, who in the Amu Darya Province has 35,700 square miles.\*

Bokhara was, once upon a time, one of the most powerful of the Central Asiatic Khanates. Politically it was not equal to Afghanistan, but it was the Mecca of the Asiatic Mohammedans. The shrines of Moslem saints scattered over its holy soil, and the schools and colleges of its capital, gave it, in the eyes of a people with whom religion and rule are inseparably mixed up, a distinction over kingdoms more powerful in men and arms. Yet it is nearly four times the size of modern Khiva, and has a population almost three times as numerous. The banks of the Oxus, and the region fertilised by the water drawn from it by the Zarafshan River Canal, is about the only part of the country cultivated. Outside these oases the land is desert, sandy steppe, in which a well is a highly-valued possession. In the watered region, cotton, silk, grains, and fruits are grown, and in these products, and in the broad-tailed sheep and cattle reared, a considerable trade is done with the camel-caravans passing to the shores of the Caspian, *via* Khiva, and northward to Siberia, and westward to China.†

"Bokhara the noble," as the capital was once styled, little merits nowadays its pompous designation. Vambéry describes it as one of the dirtiest and most unhealthy places in all Asia, and later travellers have given a scarcely more flattering account of this once famous city, which the inhabitants claim to have been founded by Alexander the Great among the reeds and fens of the Zarafshan River oasis. Its population, consisting of Uzbeks, Afghans, Arabs, Jews, Nogais (Russian Tatars), Kirghiz, Tadjiks, Hindoos, and Turkomans, does not number much over 30,000, though Wolff has estimated it as high as 180,000. The place, however, still boasts of many colleges or "medresses," and the spiritual wants of the people are catered for by a multitude of mollahs, whose mosques still retain something of their ancient splendour. The city is surrounded by a wall four miles in circuit, and pierced by eleven crumbling gates. The bazaars, frequented by almost every Asiatic people, present a busy sight; while at Karshak, south-east of the capital, and also a great trading place, excellent swords, knives, and other articles of cutlery are made. The Khan is an unqualified despot, but his power is on the wane, since part of his ancient territory has passed into the hands of Russia. Sixty years ago this Central Asiatic monarch was courted by the English and the Russians, much after the same fashion as the Shah of Persia is, or was, or as the Amir of Afghanistan used to. But Nasrullah Bahader treated the one with arrogance and the other with contempt, the consequence of which was that his successor, Mozaffar-eddin, found an army of the Czar in his territory, and by 1868 a Russian garrison firmly stationed in Samarcand. The result is that Bokhara has become, though nominally independent, in reality a dependency of Russia, which cannot fail before long to absorb it entirely. These Central Asiatic Khanates have a fatalism for running their heads against the pricks, and the Manghit dynasty, which succeeded in

\* Burnaby: "A Ride to Khiva" (1877); MacGahan: "Campaigning on the Oxus" (1874); Rawlinson: "England and Russia in the East" (1874); Baker: "Clouds in the East" (1876); Clarke: "Statistics and Geography of Russian Turkestan" (1879); and Schuyler's, Lansdell's, and Vambéry's works *passim*.

† Vambéry: "Skizzenbilder auf den Morgenlande" (1874); "Sketches of Central Asia" (1875).



seizing the Bokhara throne on the fall of the Ashtarkhanides, does not seem likely to stave off the inevitable very long.\*

Karategin—a mountainous district on the western slope of the Pamir Steppe—was, with the valley of the Sarkhan River and its tributaries, an independent principality up to the period of Russia's annexing the Khanate of Khokan, or Ferghana, when it passed under the rule or "protection" of Bokhara. Gharm, or Karategin, the capital, contains about 800 houses. Little ground is cultivated, but cattle are bred, and rough woollens woven of the fleece of their sheep, or of the hair of goats. Gold is found in the sands of the streams, and excellent weapons are made of the iron brought from Hissar and Wantch. The preparation of salt and the hunting of wild beasts also give employment to many of the population. But altogether Karategin, which does not contain more than 100,000 people, chiefly of a very moderate Mohammedan faith, with its thickly wooded mountains, and secluded pastoral valleys, has not much concern with the world which formerly so little troubled it.†

#### TRANSCASPIA (THE TURKOMAN COUNTRY).

Between the Oxus and the northern frontier of Persia, and as far west as the Russian provinces on the other side of the Caspian, stretches the Kara-Kum, or Black Sands, a desert almost unrelieved by a single fertile spot. But by the wild Turkomans, or nomadic robber tribes, it was regarded as the most effectual of barriers between them and the civilisation which is foreign to their ways of life. These Turkomans are for the most part predatory. They cultivate a few spots on the borders of the desert, where the streams which flow down from the Persian and Afghan highlands moisten the dry soil before being lost in the sand of the Kara-Kum. But the main resource of these untamed Tartars is highway robbery. The trader and the traveller in the vicinity of their country dread, with reason, the onslaughts of these Asiatic Bedouins, and the frontier farms and villages of Persia have for many years been harassed by the Turkoman robbers in search of plunder and slaves. Persian captives were numerous among them, and more recently they did not spare even the Russian settlements, an imprudence which brought on them the vengeance of the Czar. They own no regular chiefs, nor do they possess what can be designated as a form of government. However, for mutual protection and convenience they have gathered into little tribes, the most powerful of which are the Tekkes, whose strongholds are to be found all along the borders of Persia, from Kizil-arvat to the south-west of Merv, generally considered the Turkoman capital. The Tekkes are, indeed, one of the few Turkoman tribes which can be considered non-nomadic. Dr. Schuyler described them as half sedentary, living in large villages, and submitting in some degree to the authority of their elders, thus constituting a society with a primitive form of organisation.

\* Vambéry: "History of Bokhara" (1873), and Grigorief's critique on it translated in Appendix II. of Schuyler's "Turkestan," Vol. I., pp. 360-389, strictures which must, however, be read with many allowances; Wolff: "Travels in Bokhara" (1844); Khanikoff: "Bokhara" (1845); Fedchenko: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XL. (1870), p. 448; Hellwald: "The Russians in Central Asia" (1875); Meyendorff: "Bokhara" (1877), etc.

† Abramof: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLI. (1871), p. 338; Morgan, *l.c.*, p. 295.



Hence they are the strongest of the race, and their *alaman*, or raids, have sometimes extended as far as Meshad and Herat. Colonels Markozof and Stoletof describe a Tekke "aul" as having the "kibitkas," or dwellings, arranged on two sides of the fort, which is usually the centre of their encampment. Bags of wheat, rice, and sorghum, carpets, felts, and household articles, are the contents of the huts, and occasionally an apparatus for smelting copper, agricultural tools of a primitive kind, looms for weaving carpets, and some of the apparatus used by breeders of silkworms may be seen. Horses, cattle, pigs, and fowls wander about, and near the fort are small gardens planted with poplars and cotton. Small water-mills are also usually established near each fort. The inhabitants of the Tekke oasis, as far as the fortress of Anev,



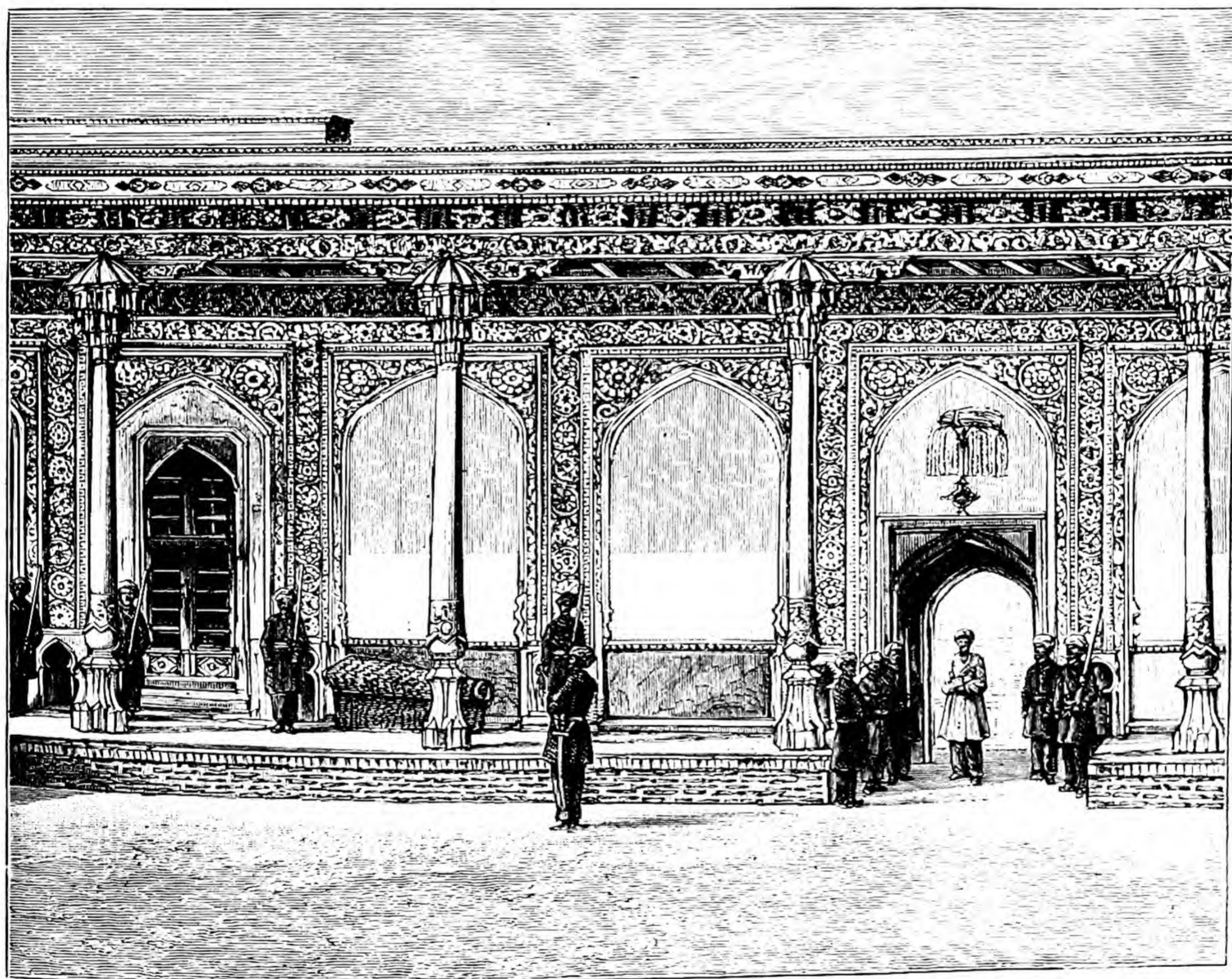
TURKOMAN WOMEN.

call themselves Akhal, to distinguish themselves from the Tekkes. The latter were nominally under the Khan of Khiva, to whom they formerly paid tribute, one camel for each fortress, but that has now been replaced by about twelve roubles a year for each irrigating canal. The Akhal Tekkes were at one period governed by an independent Khan who enjoyed absolute authority, but at last, tired of the constant quarrels of his tribesmen, this ruler retired to Merv, and left the people to the anarchy which has ever since been their doom. The Akhal Tekkes are divided into two families—the Tokhtamish and the Utamish—who are always rivals, in spite of efforts at union inspired by dread of the menaces of Russia on one side, of the Persian Kurds on another, and of the Khivan Yomuds in a third direction.

The Russians recently completely subdued the Tekkes, who least of all the Turkoman tribes established friendly relations with the rulers of the Trans-Caspian district; this entailed the annexation of the Merv oasis (as a private imperial domain) and its capital



of the same name. A railway now runs to it from the Caspian. This town—like others on which the traveller in Central Asia continually comes amid the drifting sands, or in the oases which neglect of the canals is allowing to lapse into desert, half-ruined—is much more imposing in a “leading article” than in its poor reality. Placed, however, in the oasis of the Murghab, one of the few habitable spots in an arid land, Merv has always maintained a certain celebrity. Sir Henry Rawlinson



COURT OF THE PALACE OF THE EX-KHAN OF KHOKAN.

considers it one of the oldest capitals in the world, and historically so important as to require a special monograph for its adequate illustration.\* It, however, lost all political significance in 1795, when the Amir Murad of Bokhara, not content with the submission of the town, carried off 40,000 of its inhabitants to his capital, where their descendants live to the present day in a separate quarter, and have taught the Bokharans the silk industry, which they did not understand before their arrival. In 1815 the Khivans occupied Merv. The Bokharans soon regained possession of it, but were before long

\* *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, March, 1879, p. 188.



compelled to surrender into the hands of the Turkomans, who now used it mainly as a base for their operations against the Persians. There are not more than 2,000 settled inhabitants in the town, which is surrounded by nomad encampments of Sariks and Salors in continuous succession along the banks of the Murghab. Of late years, however, nearly all of the Turkoman country has been annexed by Russia. Indeed, the name of "Turkomania" has entirely disappeared from the official map, that of Transcaspia taking its place. This division is again parcelled out into the provinces of Akhal-Tekke, Krasnovodsk, Manghishlak, Merv, Tedjen, Yolotan, and Sarakhs; in all, including the Caspian, about 390,000 square miles. Most of these once lawless Turkoman tribesmen, sharp in recognising the inevitable, are settling down to be loyal subjects of the Czar.\*

Their number can only be known approximately, but from rough estimates they are considered to approach 206,000. Their breed of horsemen is fine, their courage unimpeachable, and their ferocity, if it were possible to keep it in check, would make them the terror of any barbarous race against whom they might be employed as irregulars in the pay of a civilised power. To this all Central Asia must in time descend, for the area of country "independent" of Russia is little by little, and now and then very rapidly, getting so curtailed, that before long it will exist only in the pages of history.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### RUSSIAN CENTRAL ASIA.

Up to the year 1864, the Russian possessions in Central Asia were small. But shortly prior to that date anarchy reigned in the country, owing to the almost continual wars which the Khans of Bokhara, Khokan, and Khiva had waged with each other. The arrival of the Czar upon the scene resulted in the invasion of Khokan, the occupation of the city of Tashkend, now the capital of the Russian Central Asiatic territories, and finally, in 1867, the absorption of the entire Khanate. By 1868 Samarcand—the famous capital of the mighty empire of Timour Leng, and the place wherein did "Kublai Khan a stately pleasure dome decree"—fell, and with it that part of Bokhara of which it was the immediate centre, which was forthwith erected into the district of Zarafshan. The circumstances which led Kuldja to be temporarily occupied in 1871 we have already related (p. 95), whilst the third campaign against Khiva, as we have seen, terminated in 1873 by the capital of that Khanate and the Khivan territory along the right bank of the Oxus, or Amu Darya, being ceded to the invaders. The Russian conquests now extended as far as the Atrek on the frontiers of Persia, and when in 1875 the Khanate of Khokan was finally incorporated into the empire of the

\* Kostenko: "Central Asia," pp. 21, 22; Morgan: *Jour. of the Roy. Geog. Soc.*, Vol. XLVIII. (1878), p. 312; O'Donovan: "The Merv Oasis" (1882); Marvin: "Merv" (1885); Boulger: "England and Russia in Central Asia;" etc.



Czar, the summit of the range of the Western Thian Shan mountains became the eastern limits which perforce had to own the rule of Alexander II. Still more recently, the annexation of Turkomania made the Russian border coterminous with that of Afghanistan. There is now no neutral zone. But, with scarcely an exception, this territory does not pay its expenses; and the 6,000,000 inhabitants, though almost compelled to buy Russian goods, are rapidly beginning to find English wares in their bazaars, and to discover that in spite of duties considered almost prohibitory these articles can be purchased cheaper than those brought direct from Russia by way of the Caspian. Such, at least, is the complaint of the Russians themselves, though the railway is likely to alter this.

#### THE KIRGHIZ STEPPE, ETC.

The Kirghiz Steppe, as the northern part of the region is called, is a dry stony tract, inhabited by few Russians, and used in common by various Kirghiz tribes as a pasture-ground for their droves of horses and cattle. The southern portion, from the salt-water lake, or inland sea, of Balkash (p. 98), to the Thian Shan and the sea of Aral, is better, though a great part of the western region is covered by the Kizil Kum, or Red Sands, stretching between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya—or, as the ancients called them, the Jaxartes and Oxus rivers. The east division is, on the other hand, for the most part mountainous, and comprises the high ranges north of the Thian Shan. The low-lying "Seven Streamland" south of the Balkash yields crops and pasturage, and in the mountain valleys watered by the feeders of the Syr Darya, and of Lake Balkash, are some fine valleys, while, as we have seen, the mountain slopes yield excellent timber. The shores of the Issik Kul (p. 99)—a lake which occasionally overflows to the River Chui, and helps to swell the waters lost in the desert between Balkash and the Aral—seem in remote days to have been the home of many people. Indeed, all this region is now only a wreck of what it once was. Every valley bears the trace of having in former days supported a great population; and their tangled history is the tale of how successive conquerors reared and destroyed empires, until the ruined races either reverted into semi-barbarism, or lost the enterprise and spirit which once distinguished them. The Ili Valley\* we have already described, with the Chinese and Russian settlements along the banks of the river. Altogether, the districts of the Kirghiz Steppes contain about 720,000 square miles and 1,853,770 people.

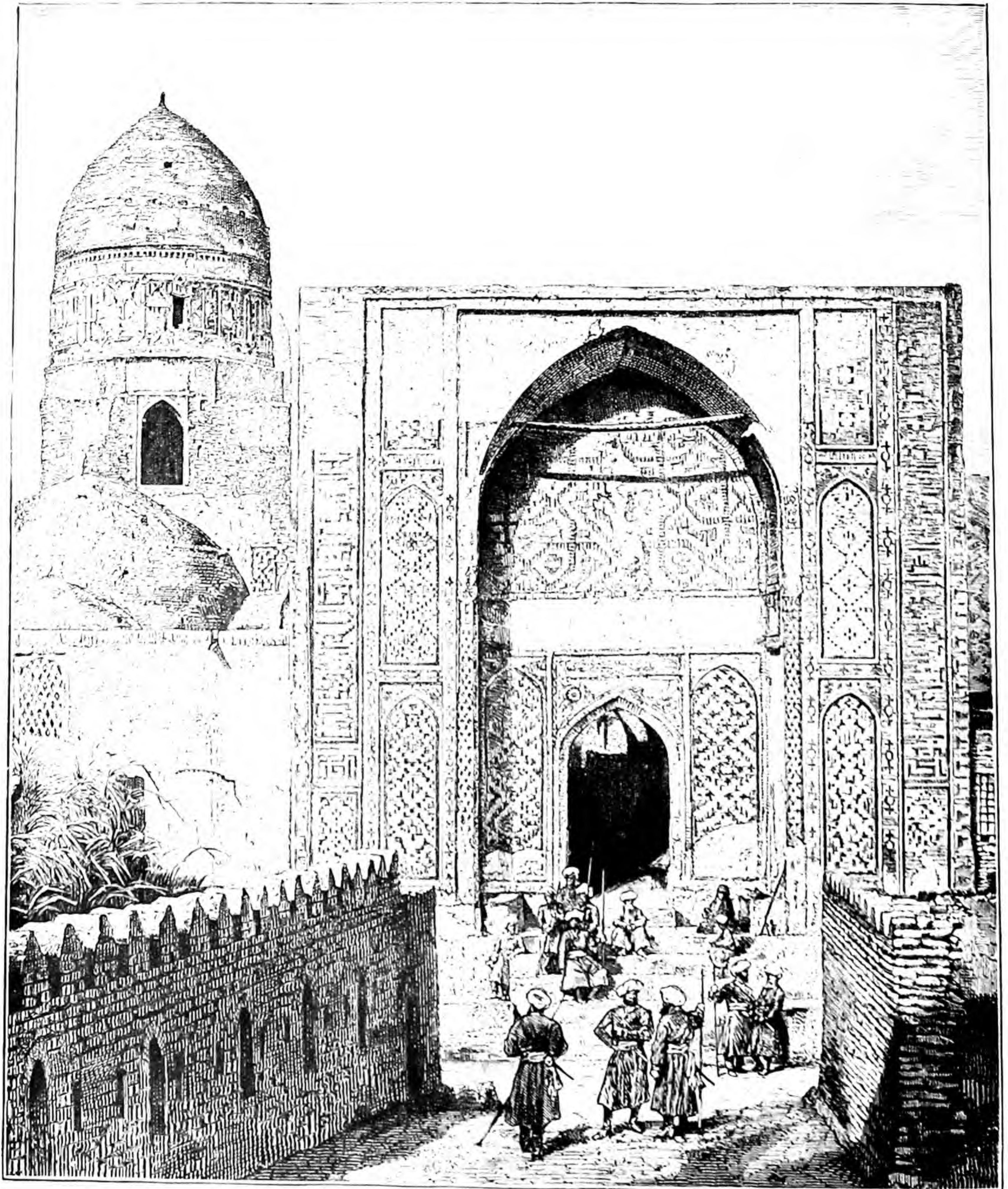
#### FERGHANA.

The Narin Valley, or *Ferghana*,† was for the most part the former Khanate of Khokan, Kokan, or Khokand, as the name is often written, which in 1875 lost its independence. The Usbeks, or Uzbeks, a Turkish people who three hundred years ago conquered the small

\* For a tolerably recent account of Kuldja, see Major Clarke in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, August, 1880, pp. 489–499, and for some further particulars *Consular Reports*, "Miscellaneous Series," No. 85 (1888).

† Severtsoff: "Journey in Ferghana and the Pamir, in 1877–8," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, August, 1880, p. 499; Morgan: "Recent Geography of Central Asia," *Supplementary Papers of the Roy. Geog. Soc.*, Vol. I., pp. 203–263.





NATIVE POLICE AT THE GATE OF THE MOSQUE OF SHAH ZINDEH, SAMARCAND.

States which then divided Central Asia amongst them, and still maintain political supremacy, are the most numerous race in the country, though Kipchaks, Kara Kirghiz, and Tadjiks also comprise a considerable portion of the population which—nomad and



settled—does not number over one million. The climate is more equable than in most other parts of Russian Turkestan, being warmer in winter, when little snow falls, but on summer days Dr. Schuyler describes the heat as differing little in intensity between Tashkend and Khokan, but the nights are always cool and comfortable. The soil is rich, and this, combined with the excellence of the climate, has put agriculture into a flourishing condition in the Khanate, though it is still capable of being much farther



THE TOMB OF SAINT DANIEL-PALVAN, NEAR SAMARCAND.

advanced. The mountains abound in minerals, coal crops in places, and naphtha and petroleum wells have been found in numerous localities. It is also affirmed that copper, lead, iron, as well as inferior tin quarries, are to be found. Khokan, the capital (p. 293), lies in a valley south of the Syr Darya, but Tashkend, built on a fertile plain near one of the northern tributaries of the Syr, is the largest town in Russian Turkestan, and the seat of the Government. It is surrounded by a wall of sun-dried bricks twelve miles in circumference, and owing to its being the meeting-place of several great caravan routes, is one of the busiest trading places in the country.

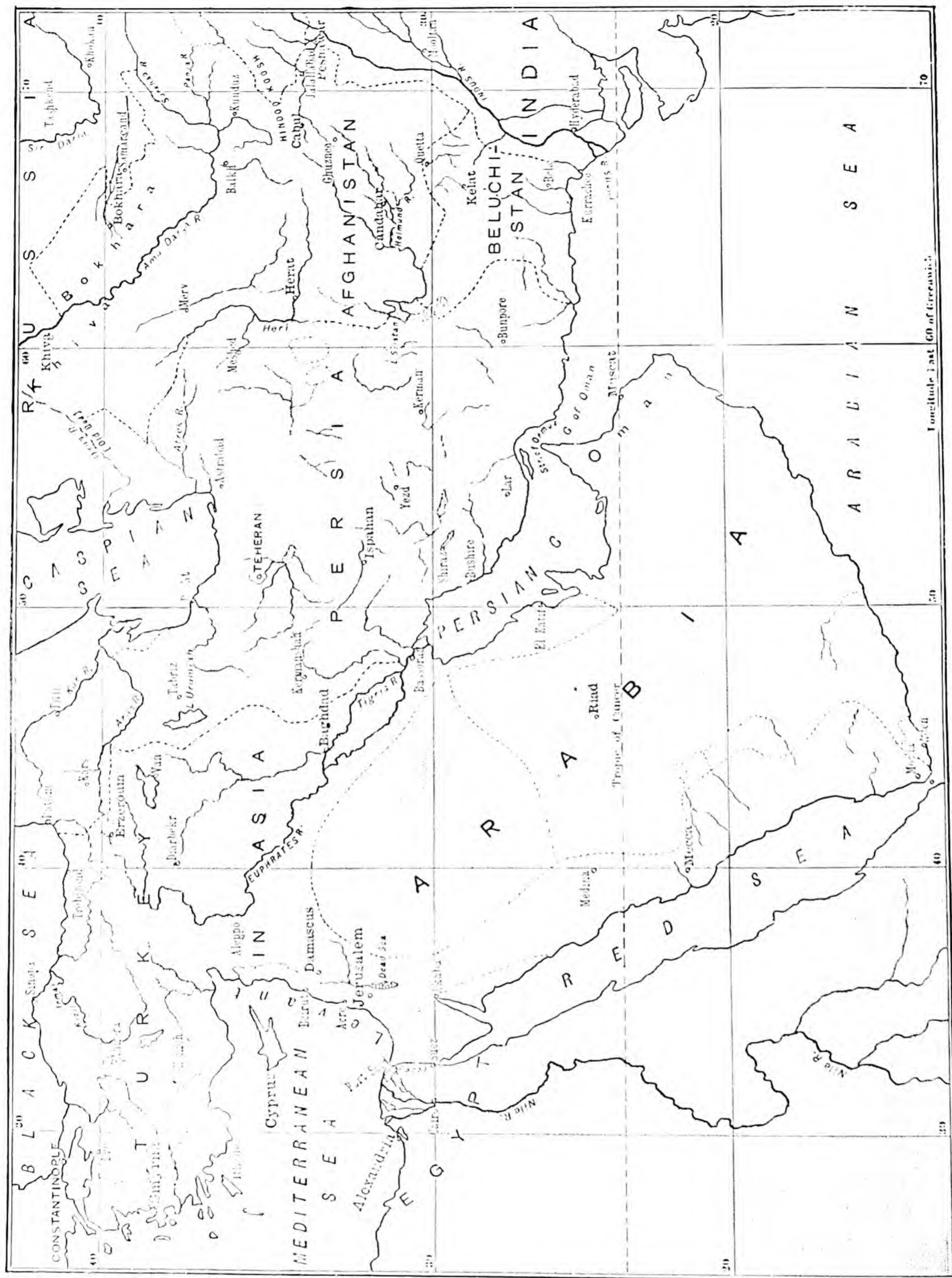


Since the Russians have obtained possession of it Tashkend has wonderfully changed—for the better or the worse. The native city still exists pretty much as it always did, and does not differ except in degree from any of the other drowsy Central Asiatic towns. But the European quarters are so very modern that Dr. Schuyler, looking at it for the first time by moonlight could scarcely believe that he was not in one of those brand-new American “cities” with which he was so familiar at home—more particularly one of the little towns of Central New York. “The broad, dusty streets, shaded by double rows of trees; the sound of rippling water in every direction; the small white houses, set a little back from the street, with trees and a palisade in front; the large square full of turf and flowers, with a little church in the middle—all combined to give me this familiar impression. By daylight, however, Tashkend seems more like one of the Western American towns—Denver, for instance—though lacking in the busy air which pervades that place, and with Sarts in turbans and gowns, in place of Indians and miners. The conditions of the town are, indeed, much the same: it is built on the Steppe, and owes its green and fresh appearance to the canals which bring streams of fresh water through every street. The sides of the streets are planted with poplars and willows, which in this country grow quickly and luxuriantly; a small stake driven into the ground soon becomes a fine tree; gardens spring up almost like magic; and I saw in the garden of a laboratory a peach-tree bearing peaches the third year from the seed.” When Schuyler visited the place—and we are led to understand from more recent travellers that it has not increased greatly since that date—there were about 600 houses in the Russian quarter, and a population of 3,000, exclusive of the garrison of about 600. New houses were springing up rapidly, and the growth of the town in its nine years of existence seemed to the traveller something wonderful. But on closer examination this seeming vitality proved to be very artificial. The real, permanent population of the city is small, for trade, in the European acceptation of the term, is trilling. There are few great merchants, and manufactories do not exist. A handful of people come to make money and return “home” to spend it, but with these exceptions no one lives in Tashkend who is not obliged to do so by pressure of official duties. This distinguishes it at once from similar American towns; and moreover in Tashkend most of the pretty houses which the visitor so admires have been built by the aid of money lent by the Government, of which, it may be added, but little is ever repaid. Sun-dried bricks covered with plaster are the usual material of which the buildings are constructed, and they are seldom more than one storey high. “Owing to the scarcity of wood, and the dearness of iron, the roofs are very peculiar; between the rafters which compose the ceilings pieces of small willow branches are closely fitted together, the whole is then thatched with reeds, and on this is placed a layer of clay every year to render the roof in any degree waterproof. During the summer, when it does not rain, these roofs are excellent and very pretty, as they are often covered with wild poppies, capers, and other flowers. When the rainy season commences one must be very careful; it may be that too many layers of clay have been placed on the roof, and the timbers have become worn, so that the whole thing falls through; or perhaps not enough clay has been put on, and one violent rainstorm is sufficient to wash a large hole in it.” In Central Asia upholsterers are



unknown, and hence, as all furniture has to be brought from Europe or Siberia, simplicity is the rule. Still the houses, in spite of their fragility, are comfortable. The want of Western appliances is to a great extent redeemed by the great wide divans, the profusion of Turkoman carpets, the embroidered cushions, and the display of Oriental weapons, armour, and curiosities, which give the rooms an air of elegance which they would not otherwise possess. In the summer all who can afford it leave their town-house and take refuge from the heat in cottages built among the gardens of the suburbs, or in Kirghiz kibitkas, or Bokharan pavilion tents. The sun does not penetrate through the foliage of the elms and poplars; there is a fragrance of flowers all round, and a coolness imparted by the canals and watery ponds. "When at night the paper lanterns stand out against the dark green of the pomegranates, while the nightingale sings as the light shimmers over the still surface of the water, it is a scene taken bodily from the 'Arabian Nights.'" The Palace of the Governor-General, the public buildings, the mosques, and the Buddhist temple are the chief structures. Hotels proper can scarcely be said to exist in the city, though boarding-houses, restaurants, and above all private hospitality, go far to make up for the want of "licensed victuallers." Otherwise Tashkend does not differ widely from any other Russian town. The "Moskovs," like the British, carry their country with them. The amusements, mode of living, and social prejudices, are in Turkestan very much what they are further west. Only perhaps the lazy life and the surroundings have induced an even lower morality than in Moscow and St. Petersburg; and as the officers who elect to be sent to Central Asia are frequently "broken men," who for good reasons find it convenient, for a time at least, not to live too much in the public gaze, the result can be imagined. Luxuries are also dear over the country, though necessities are moderate in price. Beef is bad, but mutton is plentiful, good, and not very costly. Game is abundant, and though the Syr Darya contains many sturgeon, fish is rare. Fruits can be had almost for the asking, and garden vegetables are beginning to be raised in abundance. Grapes grow in profusion, and consequently wine of several kinds, but all equally strong and sour, can be had. A very indifferent beer is brewed, but, of course, good European wines can be purchased, though at about four times the St. Petersburg prices. English ale and porter are luxuries even procurable in this Central Asiatic town; the latter is an especial favourite, as it ought to be, considering that the cost of the black liquid is ten shillings per bottle. There is, as in every Russian town, a "Cercle," or club—"as stupid and unclublike as all Russian clubs." There exists a fair library, a large chemical laboratory, and the famous "Turkestanski Vedomosti," or *Turkestan Gazette*. This little sheet consists mainly of articles on the natural history, chronicles, and ethnology of the country. It contains no news of the outer world, and little even of events transpiring in Central Asia; while the Turki supplement for the enlightenment of the natives is filled with translations of the "Arabian Nights," and similarly instructive matter. Its circulation is merely nominal, but being kept up by the Government, the journal has a reputation and importance in Europe out of all proportion to its character or merits. The exact number of inhabitants in the city has not been ascertained, but in the last official census it is put at 100,000, and the whole population of Ferghana at 808,000. This is not an over-estimate.





MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA, PERSIA, ARABIA, AND TURKEY IN ASIA.



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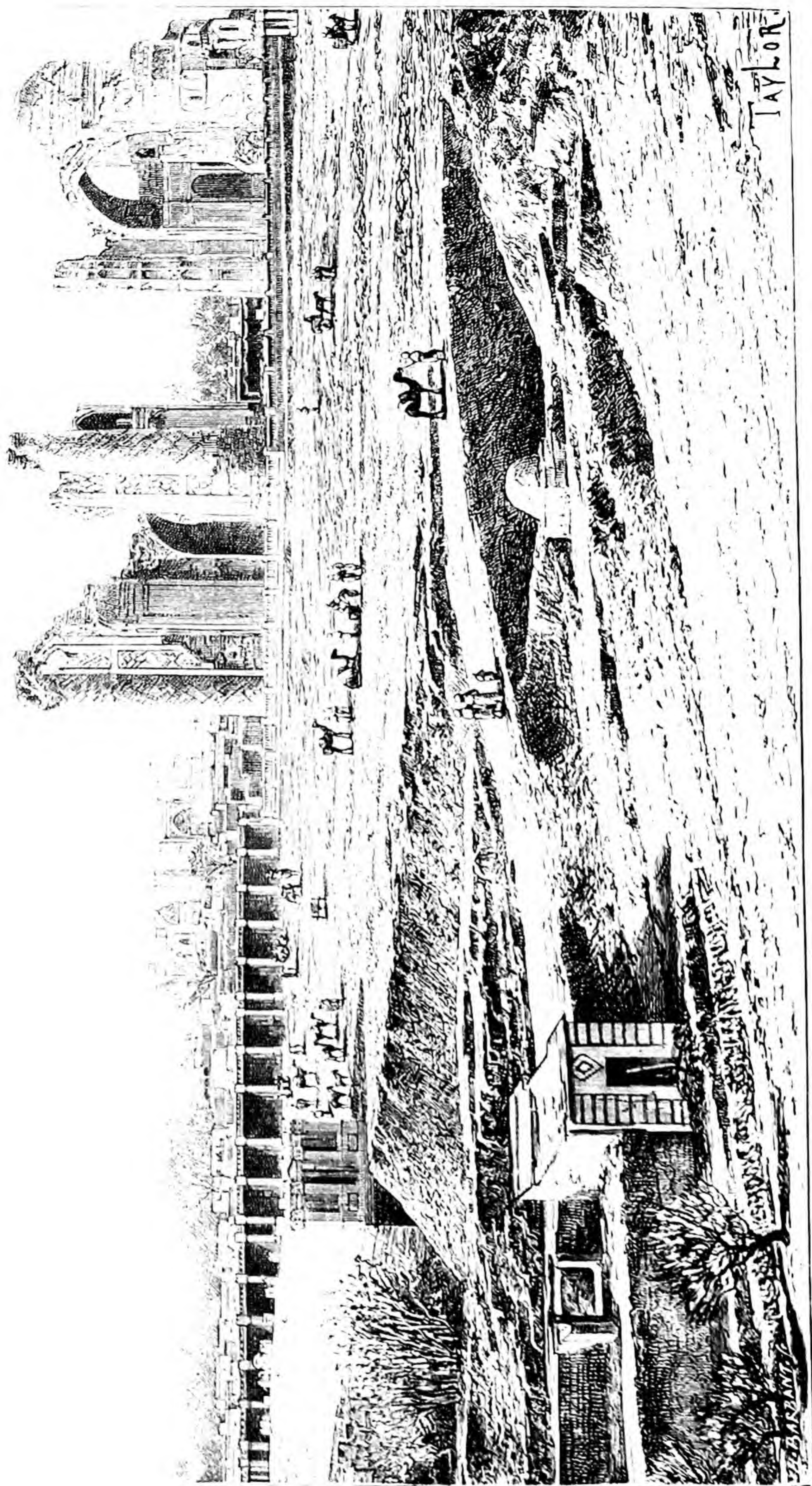
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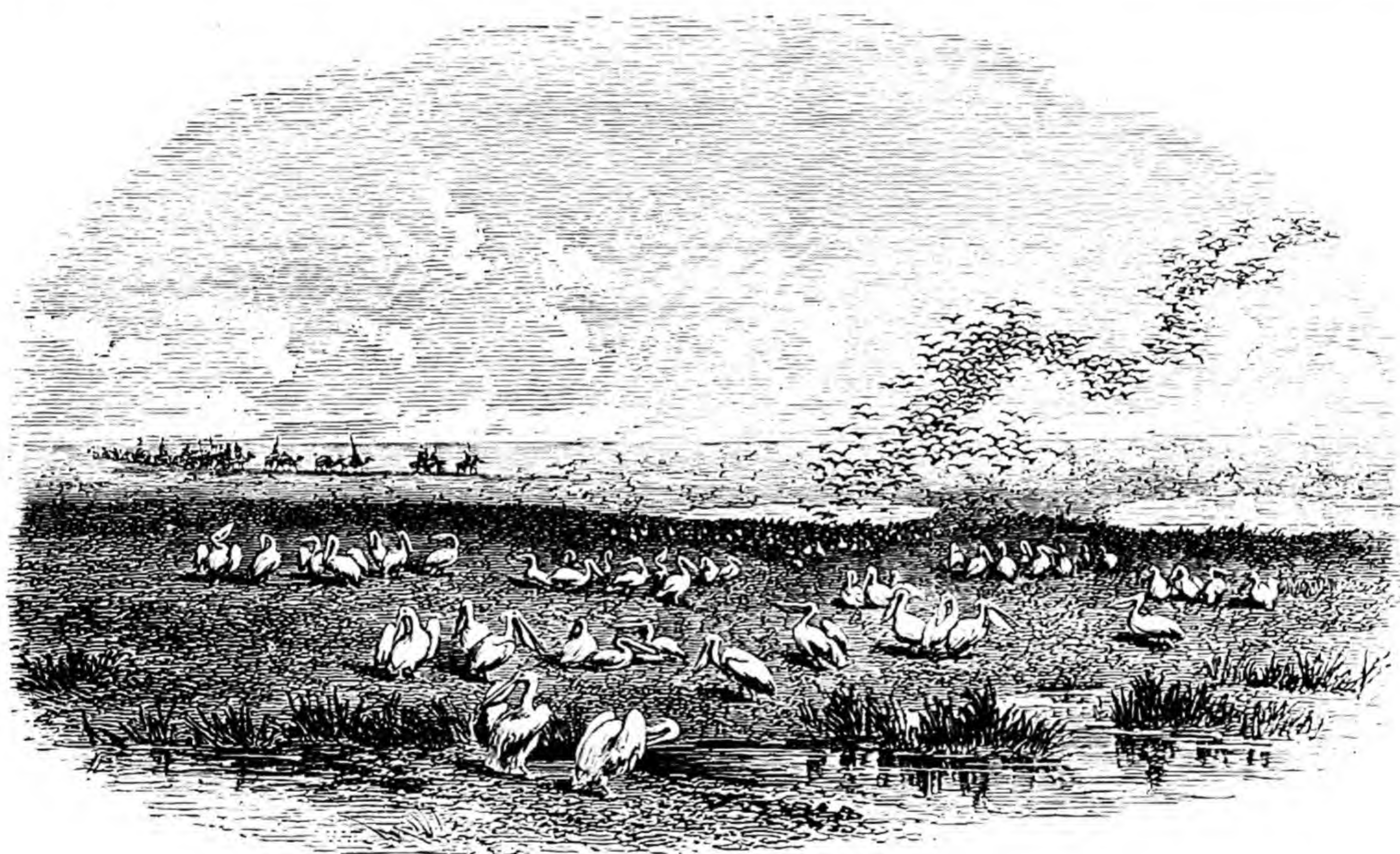


BIBI KHANYM PLACE, SAMARCAND.



## ZARAFSHAN.

The capital of this district, Samarcand, with its six gated-walls, and its memories of Tammerlane—or 'Timour Leng—who is buried within it, is a still more interesting town, though its interest centres all in its ruinous buildings and the tales which still cling to them (pp. 296, 297). From the middle of the market place the "melancholy domes" of the mosques rise above the flat-roofed houses, and in the background are high mountains, covered during part of the year with snow, on which the rays of even an Asian winter sun are reflected with dazzling brightness. Samarcand is a city of the past, but as the railway reached it in 1888 it may have a future. Here Alexander the Great killed Clytus in a fit of drunken passion; in this town, even in those days an important place, the Macedonian conqueror



SCENE ON THE STEPPES OF THE CASPIAN.

fixed his head-quarters when he was warring with the mountain tribes, and preparing for his expedition against the Scythians on the other side of the Syr Darya. Traditions of the exploits of Alexander, or Iskender Dulkarnain (the two-horned), are still among the stock tales of the inhabitants. Many of the petty princes of the Upper Oxus country claim their descent from him. But their genealogies are extremely apocryphal; for though the generals he left in charge of his conquests founded the Græco-Bactrian dynasties, and introduced among other elements of Greek culture the Macedonian calendar, little now remains to attest their existence save a number of coins and medals, which are often found on the Steppe and in all the ruins about Samarcand, along the valley of the Zarafshan River. Russian society is in Samarcand smaller than in Tashkend: less punctilious, but perhaps on that account not less pleasant. In Tashkend the Governor-General keeps up a petty state, and conducts himself with a reserve towards even the highest officials not



much less than imperial. At his receptions no one is permitted to sit down in his presence, and altogether the etiquette observed is ludicrous, considering the place and the person.

In Samarcand society is freer. Indeed, there are few Russians, and those not of high rank. Adventurers either directly from Russia, or who have wandered from Siberia, and after a strange life amongst the native Khanates have only appeared in the light of civilisation after they imagined that their former misdeeds had been forgotten or forgiven, sometimes encamp here in spite of the discreet vigilance of the Lieutenant-Governor; and precise people will not hesitate to say that the morals of the later arrivals might be greatly improved without Samarcand society running any risk of being stigmatised as prudish.\*

### THE SEA OF ARAL.

Into the Sea of Aral debouch the Amu Darya, and Syr Darya—in other words, the Oxus and Jaxartes; and the amount of sand which they carry down and deposit amid the reed patches of its shallow waters has suggested the name of the lake, namely, the “Sea of Islets.” From north to south the sea stretches for 265 miles, and its breadth from east to west is 115. Hence, next to the Caspian, it is the largest body of water on the Asiatic Steppes. It is said to be 117 feet above the Caspian, which is again 84 below the Black Sea; but these data still require verification. It was only in 1848 that ships were launched on its waters, but at present its flotilla is of some importance. The flat boats of the Kirghiz have, however, navigated it from the earliest periods; but so little have they disturbed its surface or explored its shores, that when the Russians first landed on the numerous islands which skirt its coast, they found them abounding with antelopes so fearless as to prove that they had hitherto been little acquainted with man. Wild storms often blow over its shallow waters, and this, combined with the almost total absence of harbours, renders navigation somewhat dangerous. The northern end is moreover usually frozen during winter, but the southern part is never shut to any extent. Sturgeon, silurus, carp, and a species of herring—in a word the fishes of the Caspian—abound in it, its waters being only slightly brackish. Curiously enough, however, the lake has no visible outlet. Hence, at one time it was thought that it might communicate by some subterranean passage with the Caspian, 150 miles to the west. It has, however, been ascertained that the evaporation in this dry region is so great as to fully account for its equilibrium. It is now believed that its waters are, like those of the Caspian, decreasing; and some geographers, among others Sir Henry Rawlinson, are firm in the conviction that the Aral is a lake of such comparatively recent origin as not to have existed here much before the middle ages. Others—among whom Sir Roderick Murchison was the leader—maintain that the Aral and the Caspian have existed all through the historical period, and that their outlines, as well as the course of the Oxus and Jaxartes, were determined in distant geological periods. The Russian authorities have, however, a different opinion; for, as we have seen (p. 280), they are

\* An account of Samarcand and much of the country described will be found in Mr. Marvin's edition of Grodekoff's “Ride from Samarcand to Herat” (1880), and in the works already cited. Its population, numbering in Timour's time 150,000, is now not more than 42,000, including 6,000 Europeans and Jews.



endeavouring to turn the former river in the channel along which it was supposed at one time to run to the Caspian. If this should be successful—at the cost of ruin to the Khivan oasis—vessels might then be sent from the Caspian, or, indeed, from the towns on the banks of the Volga far into the heart of Russia, on to the borders of Afghanistan, thus avoiding the terrible sands of the Kizil and Kara Kums.\*

The name of Ust Urt is applied to the bare plateau between the Aral and the Caspian. Since 1873 it has been entirely Russian, the forts of Alexandrovsk, Krasnovodsk, and Chikishlar, the last at the mouth of the Atrek River, being the most important points in the region. Amu Darya (p. 290), Syr-Darya, and Semiryetchensk (*i.e.*, “the Seven Rivers,” p. 295), the Steppes south of Lake Balkash and parts of the Thian-Shan mountains round Lake Issik Kul, are the other political divisions of Turkestan.

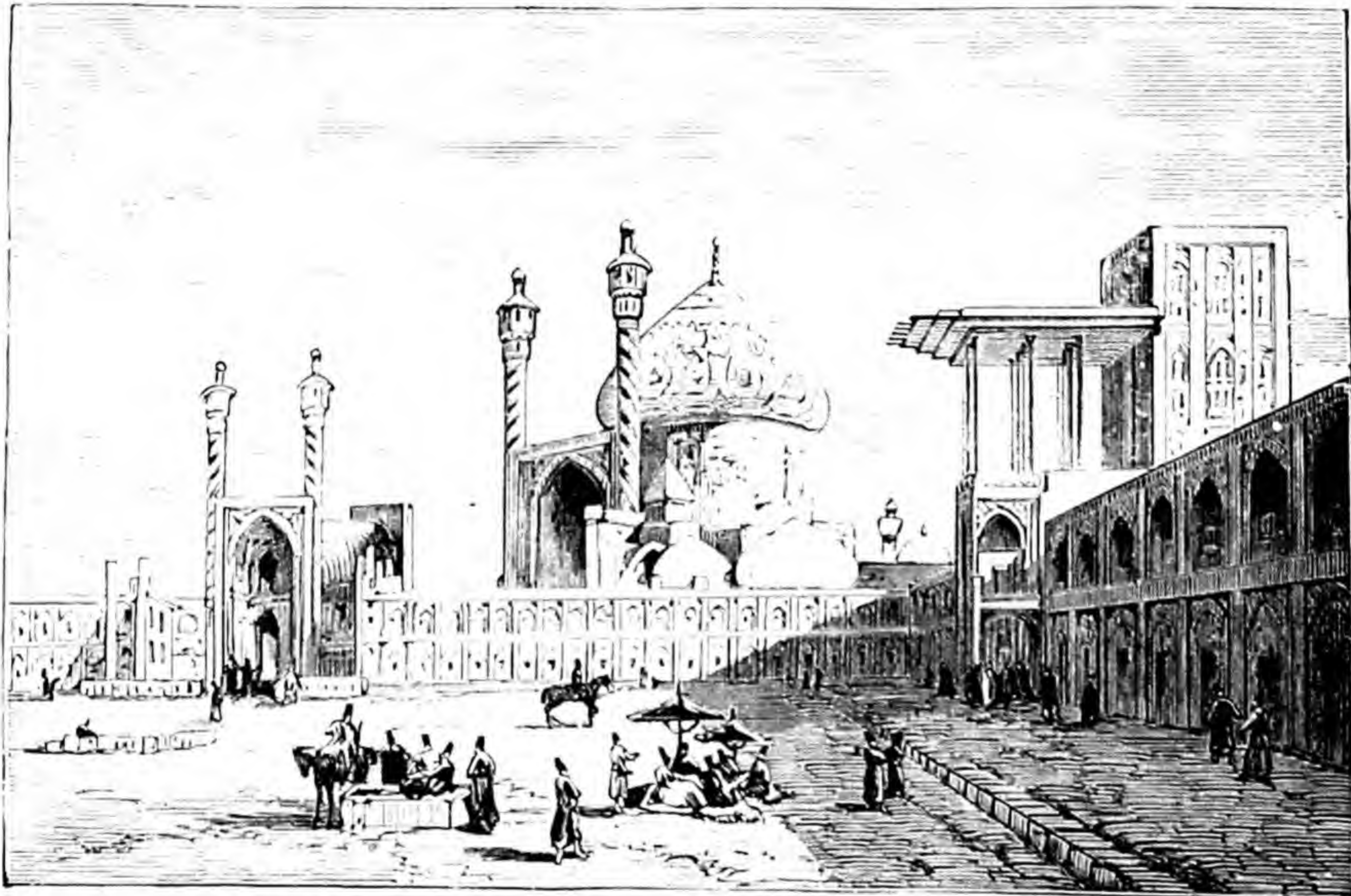
#### THE CASPIAN.

The Caspian, though now eighty-four feet below the Black Sea, is believed to have been at one time on a level with it, and to have formed one of the series of sea basins of which the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are the remains. Its elevation is probably due to the continual evaporation which has been going on until its waters have shrunk to their present level. There is, however, a neck of land lying to the north of the Caucasus, so low that a rise of twenty-three feet in the waters of the Black Sea would cause them to overflow to the Caspian, and re-convert it into the great Europo-Asiatic Mediterranean which it probably once was. Nevertheless, a lake 740 miles long, 210 broad on an average, and embracing an area of 180,000 square miles, is sufficiently extensive without the imagination finding it necessary to speculate on the still greater space it might have occupied in the past. Into it the Volga and the Ural pour the drainage of 613,000 square miles—probably more than the Don and Danube combined contribute to the Black Sea. If, however, the waters of the Kuma, the Terek, the Aras, the Kur, the Sefid, and the Atrek are taken into the calculation, it is quite evident, as Dr. Carpenter has pointed out, that the Caspian receives nearly, if not quite as much, river water as the more important inland sea to the west and south of it. Yet, owing to the great evaporation to which it is subject, the surface is not rising, but rather falling; and the saltiness of the water is curiously not so great as that of the Black Sea, or of the ocean generally. This, however, varies in different parts, and at different seasons of the year. In the shallow northern parts the water is drinkable; in the middle and southern basins the salinity is about one-third that of the ordinary sea, while in the numerous lagoons off the shore, salt is manufactured for commercial purposes from the extremely concentrated brine which is found there. The temperature of the Caspian is also extremely variable. In the summer the heat is often great, and in the winter the cold is proportionately severe. At this season the northern portion is more or less covered with ice, but as in the case of the Sea of Aral the waters of the southern reaches do not freeze. There are no perceptible tides, but the sudden changes of the wind often cause strong currents. The presence of seals

\* The literature of this subject is extensive. In Wood's “Shores of Lake Aral” (1876), Goeje's “Das alte Bett des Oxus” (1875), and Roesler's “Die Aralseefrage” (1873), the subject is fully discussed. In 1888 the Government set aside 3,000,000 roubles towards the prosecution of this project.



and herrings points to the lake having at one time communicated with the ocean, though Dr. Carpenter thinks that the communication was rather northwards with the Polar Sea, than westwards through the Black Sea and Mediterranean. The other fish are either salt water or marine. Salmon abound, and the sturgeon fisheries are so valuable that nearly the whole world is supplied with isinglass made out of their swimming bladders. Caspian salt fish are also transmitted to distant parts, and their capture and curing form the chief occupation of the people of Astrakhan and other parts on the shores of the sea. Naphtha and petroleum springs abound in the neighbouring region. Those of Baku are very celebrated, and as a railway now reaches that quarter and the Caspian is covered with steamers engaged in the business, the petroleum trade which centres in Baku is likely before long to surpass even



THE MAIDAN SHAH, OR ROYAL SQUARE, ISPAHAN.

that of the United States. The division between Europe and Asia is mainly an arbitrary one, which for our purpose need not be strictly observed. The Caspian, however, forms a sufficiently natural boundary, and accordingly we shall for the present leave it to touch briefly upon the ancient kingdom which abuts on its southern shores.

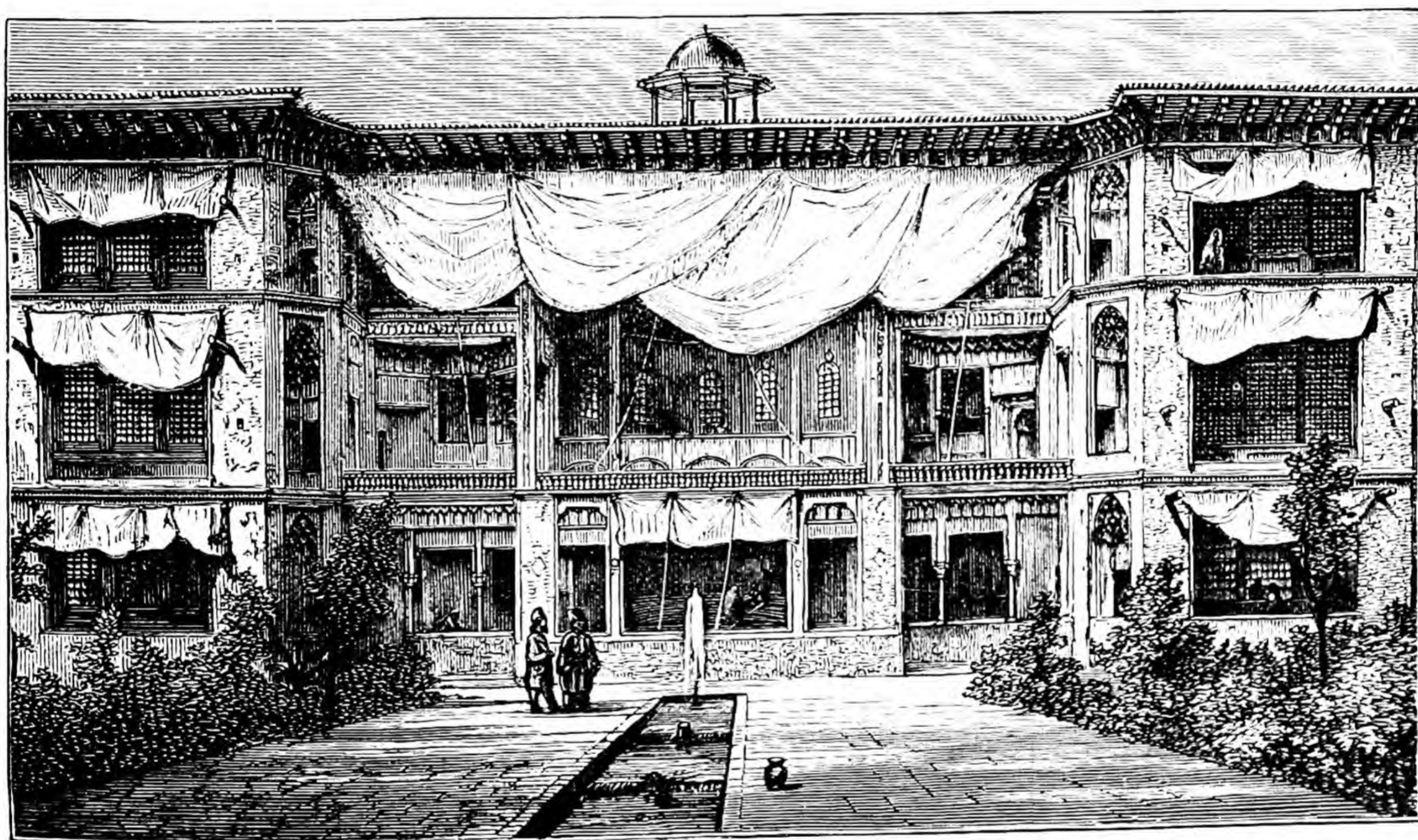
## CHAPTER XV.

### PERSIA: THE COUNTRY AND ITS PRODUCTS.

WE now enter a plateau five times the size of Great Britain, but not quite so populous as Ireland, a land which ranks among the most famous of the world, if we consider its past, but which, looking at it from its present point of view, is perhaps one of



the poorest and least important of the greater States of Asia. Nor is the cause of this decadence difficult to divine. Persia is a country for which nature has done little, and for which man must therefore do much. It is an upland averaging 2,500 feet above the level of the sea. Indeed, the only level portions are those skirting the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, and the southern shore of the Caspian; but here, though the vegetation is often dense, the climate is most unhealthy and relaxing. Leaving "Gurmsir," or the low country so called, and crossing the Elburz Range—whose volcano, Mount Demavend, towers to the height of 18,469 feet—and in the south the parallel chains of the Kohrud Mountains, and the yet partially explored and often snow-capped ranges of Kurdistan, Farsistan, and Laristan, we come on Persia proper. This is known as Sarhadd, a land of dry



THE SHAH'S PALACE AT TEHERAN.

plateaux, often sandy, and in nearly every case sterile, unless where irrigated by the few rivers which intersect the country. Once on a time the Persians attended to these irrigating works, and hence their soil was fertile and their kingdom prosperous. But nowadays an imbecile Government, whose only thought seems to be to squeeze out of the people all that cannot be expressed, does little, if anything, to develop the resources of the country; and consequently, unless a few more than ordinarily fertile villages are to be taken as exceptions, the Persia of Nasr-ed-Deen is for the most part a waste, streaked with green oases; monuments of the industry of a people from whom ages of oppression and misgovernment have not altogether eradicated some of the virtues which they possess in common with the other down-trodden nations of Asia. There are practically no railways, and few roads worthy of the name, and hence naturally a scarcity of wheeled carriages. Water communication has



also been denied "Iran," as the country is called by the natives. The rivers on the outer edge of the plateau are useful for irrigating purposes, but for little else, while Central Persia obtains the water which moistens its fields from the melting of the snows in the neighbouring mountains. This water is led off by canals, or underground channels. But as the supply is uncertain, should the snow or rain fail in the mountains, famines are as frequent in Persia as in India, the main difference being, that while the latter country can always rely with certainty on English aid in its troubles, the former cannot build any hope on the compassion or foresight of its governing classes. Perhaps the most painful proof of this was that while the European residents during the last famine raised a large sum for the relief of the wretched people, the Shah could with difficulty be persuaded to subscribe £300 to the fund!

#### THE CLIMATE.

The younger Cyrus characterised Persia as a country where the "people perish with cold at one extremity, while they are suffocated with the heat at the other." This epigrammatic bit of meteorological description is in the main true. As a rule, the summers are excessively hot, and the winters in many parts of the country as proportionately cold. The only region where the climate is comparatively equable is along the shores of the Caspian. But the moderately warm summer and mild winter are neutralised by the unhealthiness of the region. Again in Dashtistan—or the region of the Persian Gulf—the heat of the summer is almost unbearable, but the winter and spring are most enjoyable. In the interior there are greater extremes, and the winds are not unqualifiably welcome; for while the north-west breezes bring coolness, they also bear drought in their train. The south-east gales are, on the contrary, wet, but the wetness is accompanied with warmth, which makes life at that season an existence passed in a vapour bath. As a rule, the spring and autumn are the best months. Mr. Mounsey\* describes the climate of Shiraz at that season as "delicious." The plain is then green, and the gardens filled with rose-trees and nightingales. The cherries are ripening, but the green almonds are the fruit in which the Persians, who are immoderately fond of such unwholesome delicacies, indulge most. Lady Sheil is quite as enthusiastic about the spring. It begins about "Now Rooz," or the New Year Festival—that is, on the 22nd of March—and lasts until the middle of May, when it becomes a great deal too hot for the enjoyment of ordinary mortals. "After this journeys are made at night, for though the nights are still cold, the weather is getting hot during the day. The sudden approach and rapid advance of the spring are very striking. Before the snow is well off the ground the trees burst into bloom, and flowers shoot forth from the soil. At Now Rooz the snow was lying in patches on the hills, and in the shaded valleys, while the fruit trees in the gardens were budding beautifully, and green plants and flowers sprung up on the plains on every side." As the summer progresses, the heat gets so intolerable in a city like Teheran, that every one who can afford it deserts the town for the country. The valleys of the Elburz Mountains are favourite spots for rustication. Here the Shah with all his Court encamps, though the marquees, with their retinue of

\* "Journey through the Caucasus and Persia" (1872).



servants, ministers, courtiers, and soldiers, to the number of three or four thousand, present less the appearance of a temporary camp than that of a luxurious series of canvas and silken palaces. Ispahan, though hot, is not unhealthy, and the nights are comparatively cool; the climate of this part of the world possesses, therefore, an advantage over that of most parts of India, where the nights are often as warm and oppressive as the day. In July people sleep on the roofs of their houses, for the nights are usually clear and bright, the air dry, and the little dew that falls quite harmless.\* By the beginning of October the world of Teheran has returned to town, and in December those who were forced to flee the city from heat have often to complain of cold. Then ice forms on the pools, though it melts before noon, when the sun is warm, and the temperature like that of an English spring day, but by evening again the thermometer approaches the freezing point. Winter is considered to end with February, when the snow which for a few weeks overlies the country melts away, and travelling becomes pleasant. The religion and arts of Persia have already been described.† The poor people are, as a rule, very poor, and the rich, though in many cases of superior education to the Turks and other Mohammedans, are generally sensual, avaricious, and utterly without scruples, and if possessed of any conscience are able to exercise a singular control over its better impulses. The soil is fertile if irrigated, and can sustain most temperate and sub-tropical crops; and in the towns the arts of the craftsmen supply what few goods enable Persia still to carry on a little foreign trade. The wines of Shiraz are celebrated in Eastern poetry—but nowhere else in modern times—and the silk reared on the leaves of the mulberry trees is entitled to the respect of even those outside the Iran border.

#### MINERAL RESOURCES.

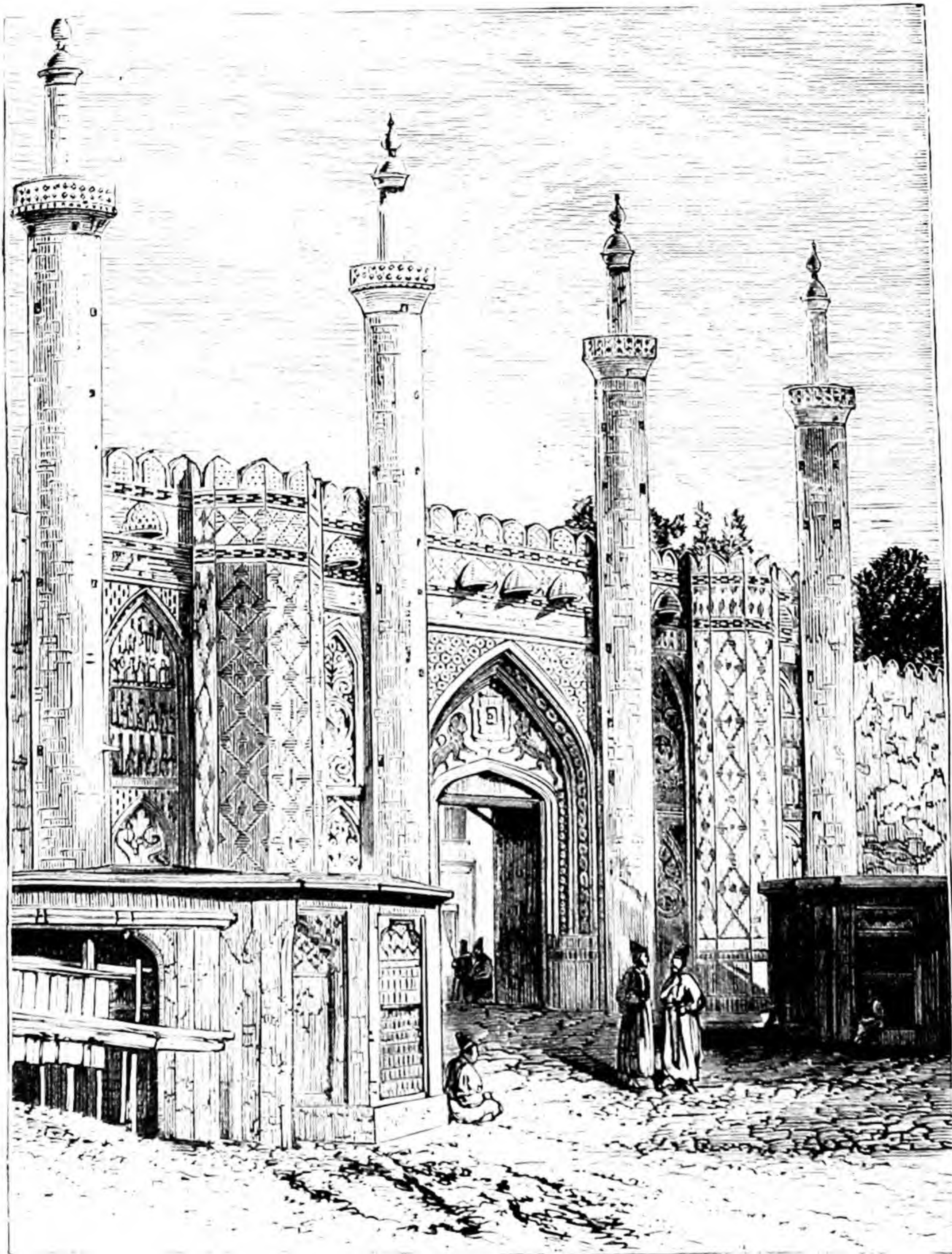
Turquoises are found in the Elburz, but the mines are not developed, and excepting salt made from the brine of Lake Urumiah or collected from the incrustations of the plateau, a little iron, lead, copper, and coal, there is hardly any mineral wealth. A contrary impression prevails owing to the notoriety which the Shah's diamonds have obtained in Europe. Doubtless, the Ruler of Persia is possessed of more gems than any other potentate—the Czar of Russia, perhaps, excepted—but his collection was not made within his own dominions. Mr. Eastwick, who was permitted to see the monarch's treasure-house, described the room as containing jewels to the value of six or seven millions, laid out on carpets at the far end of the room. "The first thing that struck me was the smallness of the door and the steepness of the stairs. It was not a nice place to escape from, if one had tried to make off with a crown or two. In such a show of gems as seemed to realise the wonder of Aladdin's lamp, the eye was too much dazzled, and the memory too confused for description. But I remember that at the back of all was the Kaianian crown, and on either side of it two Persian lambskin caps adorned with aigrettes of diamonds. The crown itself was shaped like a flower-pot, with the small end open and the other closed. On the top of the crown was an uncut ruby, apparently without flaw, as big as a hen's egg. In front of the crown were dresses covered with diamonds and pearls, trays with necklaces of

\* Binning: "Two Years in Persia," Vol. II., p. 321.

† "The Peoples of the World," Vol. III., pp. 221—250.



pearls, rubies, and emeralds, and some hundreds of diamond, ruby, and turquoise rings. In front of these, again, were gauntlets and belts covered with pearls and diamonds, and conspicuous among them the Kaianian belt, about a foot deep, weighing, perhaps, 18 lbs.,



THE OLD SOUTH GATE, TEHERAN.

and one complete mass of pearls, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. One or two scabbards of swords are said to be worth a quarter of a million each." There are sapphires in this extraordinary room as big as marbles, rubies and pearls the size of nuts, and many emeralds, varying in dimensions from half an inch square to one and three-quarter inches long, and an inch broad. In a sword scabbard which is covered with diamonds there is not



a single stone smaller than the nail of a man's little finger. There are, lastly, among other treasures, an emerald as big as a walnut, covered with the names of kings who had possessed it, and turquoises so large and lovely as almost to justify the plaudits which the Persian poets have bestowed on them. Turquoise work was, indeed, in the days of the Greeks, a speciality of the Persians. Armour of gold decorated with the gem was greatly admired, and to this day the lapidaries of Teheran and Ispahan pride themselves on their skill in inlaying the stone with designs and inscriptions. The finest stones come from Nishapur in Khorassan, where the deposits have been worked from the remotest antiquity. The Persian Government make no explorations on their own account, but lease the mines to the speculators at an annual rent of 500 tomans.\* In Chardin's† day—that is, two centuries ago—these rough turquoises were piled up on the floor of the Treasury in Ispahan “like heaps of grain,” and the polished gems filled “innumerable leather bags, weighing 45 to 50 lbs. each.” The explanation of this collection was that the Shah in those times, as in ours, seized all the best stones. Great quantities are also taken by Persian and Tartar merchants to the fair of Nishni-Novgorod in Russia. Emeralds are also highly valued by the Persians, and among the Shah's pearls there is reputed to be one worth £60,000. Some of the stones are used as talismans. On Nasr-ed-Deen's first visit to Europe, he carried with him a five-pointed star, which is firmly believed to have the power of forcing conspirators to confess their treason, and a cube of amber which is considered capable of rendering the wearer invulnerable. Another of the amulets cherished by the enlightened monarch of Persia is a little casket of gold, studded with emeralds, which, like “fern seed,” permits the wearer to “walk invisible ;” but, unhappily, its virtues have not had a proper field for their display among the occupants of the Persian throne, for it refuses to exercise them on behalf of any save a celibate. Finally, amid a multitude of similar costly rubbish used as “fetishes,” are a scimitar in which a diamond is set and a “magic dagger.” These weapons render the wielder invincible. But, here again, the genii who guide them have taken care to surround tools so valuable with the compensating drawback—that the person using the dagger will die by it. Accordingly, it is kept in a sandal-wood casket to guard against any such contingency, so that in the end it is very harmless against either friend or foe.‡

#### THE PRODUCTS, ETC.

To return to the soil. The wheat of Persia is as fine as could be desired; the only trouble is, that there is too little of it; and among the other crops are cotton, rice, and tobacco. The Persian horse is only surpassed by that of Arabia, and the fine fabrics woven from the fleeces of the sheep and goats which graze on the mountain slopes, bear a high name throughout the East; while among animals less valuable may be mentioned the lion and leopard, the antelope, wolves, jackasses, tigers, and boars, which the Shah and his courtiers—or at all events the Shah—take such delight in hunting in the forests of Elburz near

\* In a “keran” there are 1,000 “dinars,” or 20 “shahis,” equal to 11½d. In a “toman” there are 10 kerans, or 9s. 3½d.

† “Harris's Collection of Voyages and Travels,” Vol. II.; Wills' “Persia As It Is” (1886).

‡ Binning: “Two Years in Persia,” Vol. II., p. 230; Pigott: “Persia, Ancient and Modern,” p. 299.



the Caspian. The fish caught in the rivers flowing into the Caspian form a valuable source of revenue to the people living on their banks; and though less known than the carpets, silks, shawls, and arms of the city craftsmen, the sturgeon sent to Russia yield a scarcely less substantial return. The interior trade is carried on mainly by caravans, which meet and diverge from certain points. For instance, a *Kafilah* or caravan emporium is Tabriz (p. 312), where the traders of Northern India, Bokhara, Cabul, Beloochistan, and Samarcand meet those of Persia to barter or sell their wares, or to obtain the European cotton cloth which arrives here by way of Constantinople and Trebizond. Through Anzati, on the Caspian the people of Resht and Teheran draw their supplies; but the chief ports of the kingdom are Bushire and Bunder Abbas, on the Gulf of Persia, where the trade is almost entirely in the hands of the British and Arabs.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### PERSIA: THE GULF AND ITS TRADE: REVENUE, ETC.

BUSHIRE is a Europeanised form of Abu-Shehr, "Father of Cities." Mr. Geary describes the town as built on a long peninsula of sand, which projects at right angles to the coast line, and so flat that the square tower-like houses of grey sandstone appear to rise out of the water like a Persian Venice. The place is very hot. Hence, the little wind-towers, fifteen or twenty feet high, erected on the summit of all the better-class houses in order to catch every breath of wind that blows, and send it down flues into the rooms below, enable the inmates to exist during the summer heats. On the land side the city is "protected" by a ruinous wall, in which the breeches made by the British artillery when they bombarded it during the Persian war have never been repaired. On the sea front there is no wall, but at intervals a few dilapidated towers command the strand. The harbour, formed by two banks of sand, is somewhat protected from the fury of the waves, which during the wild "gulf-squalls" rise so fiercely; but large vessels have to anchor in the roads without, greatly to the profit of the Bushire boatmen, who during rough weather dictate their own terms to the ship-captains.

Mr. Geary described the town at the date of his visit as one of the largest along the shores of the Persian Gulf; but in its narrow, tortuous, and altogether unpaved and undrained streets, it bore a family resemblance to the others in the same region. The endless droves of mules had worn out deep channels which ran down the centre of the road, leaving pedestrians to pick their way along the higher grounds. As the place has never been swept since it was built, except by the plague, filth and evil smells are over all. The plague periodically visits it, and the town is dotted with graveyards so filled with bodies that the wonder is the place is habitable. Yet mules and donkeys laden with grain give Bushire an air of business; and the endless knots of beggars, who whine pertinaciously at every



street corner, prove that the Bushirees have something to give away, if at the same time they have a good many people among whom to distribute it. The place sends grain to India, and might be very prosperous were there a wagon road between the port and Shiraz. But there is only a donkey or mule path; and though the European merchants have often offered to construct one, they have never been permitted, since the Persian officials learn that there is to be no "backsheesh" for them to be got out of the enterprise. Indeed, every effort at improvement is barred by this craving for "backsheesh," an Oriental word which may be familiarly translated "palm oil." The unwritten rule through "all the gorgeous East" is, no bribe, no public work, a state of matters which also prevails in Turkey, though not to such a barefaced extent as in Persia. Hence, by a general consensus of opinion, the Sultan's side of the boundary shows greater prosperity than the Shah's, and every year many of the subjects of the latter are, in spite of the prejudice against their sect of Mohammedanism, emigrating across the frontier. Bunder Abbas, or Gombroon, the only other important Persian port in the Gulf, is an open roadstead. The undulating shore, diversified with patches of green and palm trees, and backed fifteen miles away by high ghauts, rising to 8,000 feet, and still further in the interior by snow-capped peaks, give the place a pleasant appearance when viewed from the sea. But the town itself is of small dimensions, filthy beyond Persian precedent, falling into hopeless decay, and so unhealthy that no Europeans dare live in it permanently. The natives, however, look robust enough. They subsist chiefly on the fish which swarm in the Gulf, and are to a great extent, but not nearly to the amount they might be, exported to the Red Sea, Mauritius, and elsewhere. The shoals of sardines are described as being something prodigious.

In sight of Bunder Abbas is the Island of Ormuz, which in early days under the Arabs, and then under the Portuguese, was the centre of the Gulf trade. But in 1622 it was captured by the troops of Shah Abbas the Great, aided by some English vessels. Since that day the place has been desolate. Its fine harbour is shipless, and the commerce which was driven off by the sack of the city has never returned either to it or to Bunder Abbas. The great reservoirs constructed by the Portuguese to hold the water supply, however, still remain intact; but the surface of the island—nearly twelve miles in circumference—is entirely denuded of soil and of vegetation. Salt and sulphur patch this desert, and form almost the only articles which the few Arab and Persian inhabitants export to India, as opportunity offers. The tottering lighthouse and the ruined fort stand as witnesses to the former substantiality of the place, and the numerous mounds and ruins which cover the vicinity attest the populousness of the city in early times. These might, if properly explored, yield many interesting remains. The crystalline incrustations of salt, which in places cover the surface of the hills, give them the appearance of being overlaid by glaciers.\*

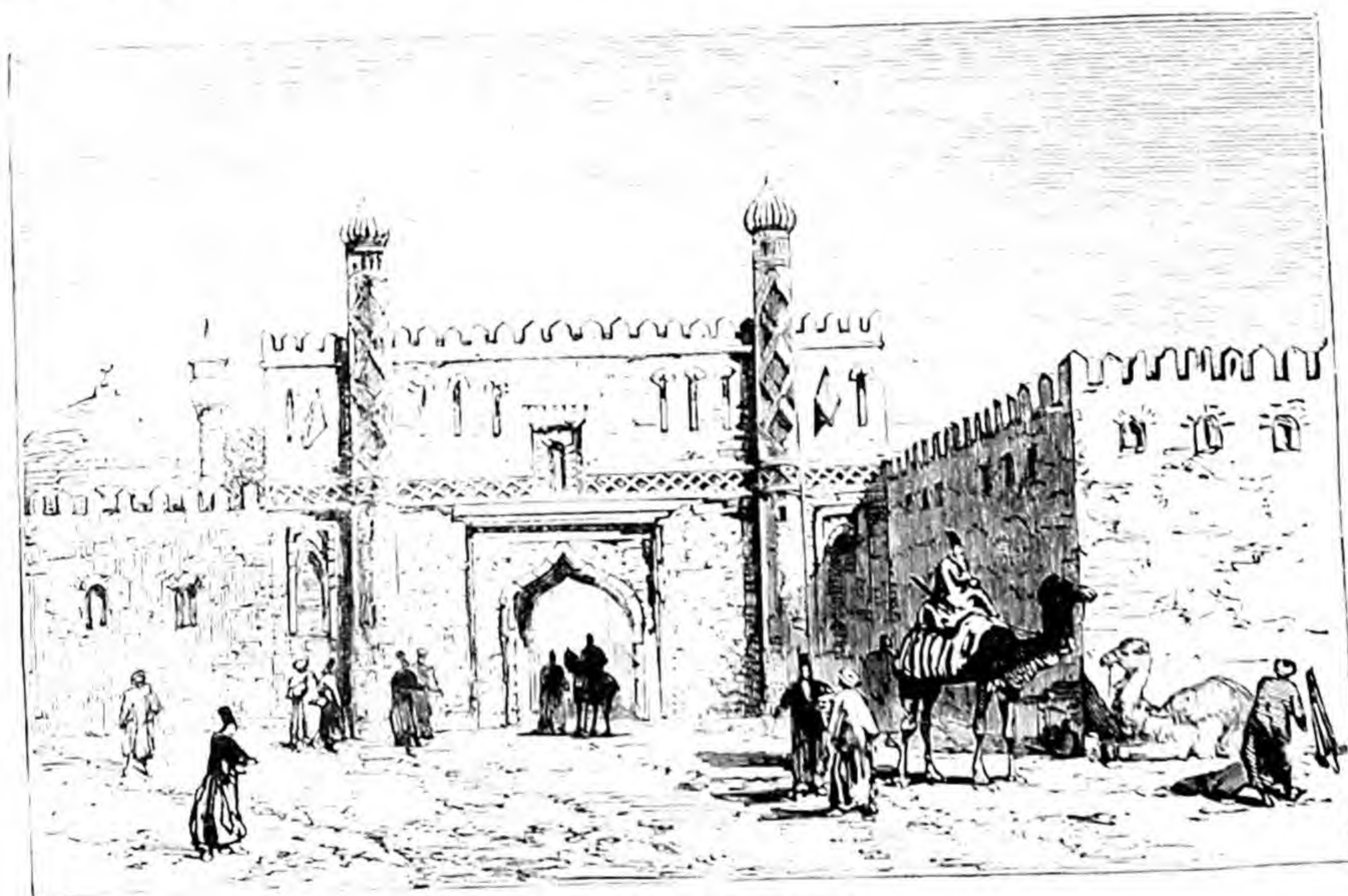
Lingah is a busy town on the Persian shore, but it is ruled by an Arab Sheik tributary to the Shah, and mainly peopled by Arab refugees from the other side of the Gulf. Otherwise, the place is as evil-smelling as any other part of urban Persia, and altogether as tumble-down. Justice is administered, as it is along the shores of the Gulf, in

\* Whitelock: *Bombay Geographical Society's Journal*, Vol. I., p. 113: Grattan Geary: "Through Asiatic Turkey," Vol. I., p. 35.



a terribly stern fashion. Robbers are common, but when caught they may consider themselves happy if they are only walled up alive, for not unfrequently they are crucified, with the addition of terrible tortures only possible for an Oriental brain to devise.

Mr. Geary described the trade of the Gulf—both local and foreign—steadily progressing, and settled order becoming the rule. The British India Company's steamers ply along the whole extent of the Gulf—600 miles long to from 120 to 230 miles broad—up and down weekly, in addition to numerous other steamers and sailing vessels. In the winter the cold is often piercing, but during the summer months the heat exceeds everything known in any other sea. British gunboats keep order in the Gulf, under the direction of our political agent at Bushire. Hence the organised piracy which prevailed until a comparatively recent period is very seldom heard of. British influence has not much increased since we



THE CITY GATE, TABRIZ.

assumed a protectorate over the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan. Yet hitherto, though British money has made the Gulf safe, the Arab Sheiks and the Shah have not been asked to contribute to the cost of their protection. This fact the Turks, when annexing strip after strip of the Gulf littoral from the Arabs, did not fail to adduce as a proof that we had no right to object to their absorption of the territories of independent tribes. The Persians look upon the British Residency at Bushire with extreme jealousy. At first they refused to allow the Resident to build a house, and even after the necessary permission was granted they stipulated that the dwelling should not be larger than the tent he at first occupied! Well might Colonel, afterwards Sir Lewis, Pelly say in an official communication to the Bombay Government that "the Persians have some good qualities, but they are jealous and small-minded beyond any people I ever came across in the course of twenty-two years' travel." Nevertheless, in spite of their dislike, the Resident still exercises judicial and political dictatorship over every place where the formal rule of the



Persian, Turkish, or Arab cannot extend. But owing to his position on foreign soil his jurisdiction is naturally exercised under considerable restraints and difficulties. Indeed, as the Persian Gulf may be said to be virtually British waters, and will become of paramount importance to India, should a railway ever unite it with the Mediterranean through the Euphrates Valley, a British settlement on its shores is every year becoming more and more a necessity, and has been advocated by Sir Lewis Pelly and other Residents at Bushire. Some locality near Cape Mussendom would meet this requirement, and act favourably not only on the Gulf trade generally, but exercise a healthful influence on Arabia and Western Mekran, while from its frontier it would speedily attract the merchants who were scattered on the destruction of Ormuz. The value of the Gulf trade has been estimated at



VIEW OF SHIRAZ.

£8,000,000. But even allowing that this is too high, it is incontestable that since the opening of the Suez Canal the commerce has prodigiously increased. Goods once brought solely by way of the old cavarán route from the Mediterranean ports *vid* Damascus and Aleppo to Bagdad, Bussorah, and Western and Northern Persia, now travel by the Red Sea route. China, Java, Bombay, and Calcutta send their contingent; and even the apathetic Persians, tempted by the new sources of wealth opened out, despatch opium to China, and grain and pilgrims to Jeddah, in steamers under their own flag. From Meshed and Herat caravans reach the shores of the Gulf, while Seyd and Bunder Abbas are partly kept alive by landward commerce from other parts of Asia, and down the Tigris and Euphrates come goods not only for remote parts, but for transshipment for "the country trade." These countries, however, only use the Gulf as a highway. Its waters, nevertheless, supply materials for trade in the shape of fish and pearls, and on its shores grow dates and other produce, the aggregate value of which is considerable.



## THE PEARL FISHERIES.

The Pearl Fisheries have been long celebrated. Off Bahrein, an island containing 50,000 people ruled by an independent Arab Sheik, there is so great a trade in these coveted ornaments that not unfrequently a single Arab will send several thousand rupees' worth of the shells alone to London; and as the banks extend along nearly the whole of the Arabian coast from Kowait to Ras el Keimah, and are also found in one or two places, though of inferior quality, on the Persian coast, the amount of pearls obtained must be great. The Coast Arabs regard the banks as their special property, and would drive away as a poacher any one from the interior caught attempting to share the marine treasures. The diving begins in June, and lasts until September. During the height of the season about 2,000 boats will be engaged in the business on the Bahrein banks alone, but along the shores of the entire Gulf not less than four or five thousand boats, each manned by from ten to thirty-two men, are engaged, these labourers being paid by a share in the venture. Still, pearl-fishing is a poor trade—to all save the pearl merchants. The latter are mostly natives of India, and usurers of a more than ordinarily objectionable type. The divers are almost invariably in their debt, and hence are obliged to sell their pearls to their creditors at prices often greatly below their value, and to buy what they require from them at a cost proportionately above the market rates. The result is that these Oriental Shylocks manage, what with the interest they charge on money advanced, and on the advantages they take in buying and selling, to so unconscionably fleece their serfs, that for a diver in an ordinary season to be in want of food is not an uncommon occurrence. When an Arab wishes to embark in the pearl-diving business, he seeks out one of these Indian usurers, and borrows money from him at cent. per cent. interest, and probably a boat at an equally extortionate rate of hire. If he is successful he may possibly be enabled to get out of his creditor's clutches. But if the season is an ordinary one, or still worse, if it proves a bad one for him, his fate is, as Mr. Geary justly remarks, somewhat like that of the Indian ryot when his crops fail—he is forced to get money to carry him over to the next season at whatever terms are demanded. The divers, during the hottest portion of the season, will sometimes descend a dozen times a day. But earlier in the year, when the sea is still comparatively cold, three or four plunges are about as much as they can tolerate in the twenty-four hours. Their mode of operations is very simple. The diver, after his nostrils and ears have been plugged up, and a weight attached to his feet, is dropped over the oysters which have been sighted through the clear water. These he detaches, and placing them in a sack round his waist, is again drawn up by the cord attached to him. A minute or a minute and a half is about the maximum time which the divers can remain under the sea. Even then the work is most injurious to their health. Nearly all of them are reduced in body, and suffer greatly from the ophthalmia which is so common among the inhabitants of the Gulf shores, and the risks they run from sharks and sawfishes render the occupation one not conducive to longevity. Quarrels among the pearl-divers are frequent, but the presence of the British gunboats on the banks during the fishing season enables the



sheiks to keep order, and above all—what they consider the final purpose of order—to levy their poll-taxes in peace. In India the yellowish-hued pearls are most sought after: in the Bagdad market the white ones are most valued, and this variety is also best appreciated in Europe; but Persia absorbs a great number of seed pearls for purposes of embroidery and for medicine, the pearl being throughout the East celebrated as a tonic. Altogether Mr. Geary, from whom we have obtained the foregoing particulars, calculates the Gulf pearl fisheries may be worth £200,000 per annum, more or less; but there is no means of arriving at anything save an approximate estimate.

#### THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POPULATION.\*

To return to Persia proper. The snows which cover the Persian plateau atone in a great degree for the absence of the monsoon. The winds blowing over in the winter months revive the dried-up denizens of the Gulf towns, and at times make even Europeans shiver. Persia and the Gulf have this advantage over India, that instead of only two seasons, they have four, and are situated "within the zone of winter rains, which extends as far as Central Europe."

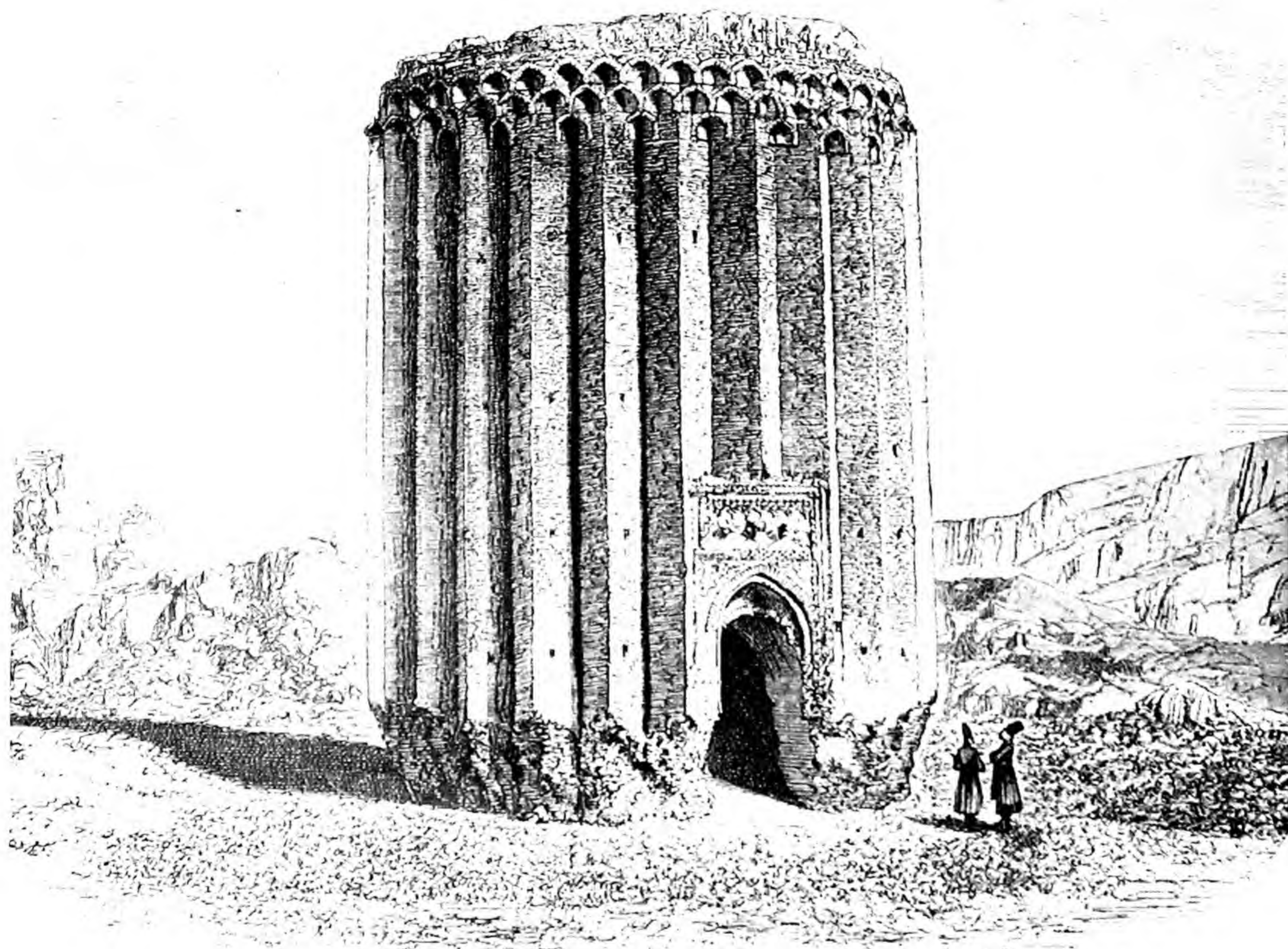
Persia is divided into four great provinces ruled by governors-general, and six smaller divisions, each under a governor.† The four great political divisions are Khorassan, or the east region, Aderbaijan, the western, or, to use the Persian imagery, "the province of the rising and the setting sun;" Irak, the central region lying between these two; and Fars, the most southern part of the country. The low-lying country between the edge of the Persian plateau and the Gulf, though under the rule of the Shah, is in the East scarcely considered a part of Persia. It is to the Orientals simply "Arabistan," or the country of the Arabs. But even without it the Shah rules over 600,000 square miles, or a sixth more than the Sultan of Turkey does in Asia. The population of the country is not known with anything like accuracy, for it is not to the interest of the provincial officials to send up returns which might inconveniently act as a check upon their peculations. A large population would inevitably result in the Teheran officials insisting on a large revenue. Accordingly, while the governors take care that every one is taxed to the uttermost farthing, they report only a moderate population as taxable, and pocket the difference. Hence Major St. John considers that instead of the population of Persia being only 7,600,000, it is nearer 10,000,000. The governors are permitted to retain their posts longer if found capable men—that is, men who send up a good revenue to the treasury, and from whose provinces no rumours of revolts or of flagrant abuses reach the capital. Members of the royal family

\* See also "The Peoples of the World," Vol. III., p. 221.

† In this statement I have followed the latest authorities. In some works, however, there are thirteen provinces mentioned; in others twenty; in a third estimate twenty-four. The discrepancies arise owing to the interpretation into English of the Persian word signifying "Province," and the estimation of the size of a tract of country entitled to that designation. In taking the view I have done, my opinion is strengthened by the authority of a distinguished European officer in the service of the Shah, who has been good enough to supply me with much information, and to read over part of these notes, compiled from various official and other documents.



also, unlike those of Turkey, are frequently appointed to office. But though the training of the princes for the place they may be one day called upon to occupy results in the Persian throne obtaining better occupants than that of Turkey, where the jealousy of the Sultan forces his near relations to a life of sensual idleness, it does not act so favourably on the country. These high-born governors are practically omnipotent. They do as seems good in their own eyes; and not being a whit less corrupt than their humbler colleagues, a bribe is always sufficient inducement for one of them, if inclined,



TOWER ON THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT BAGES, PERSIA (BELIEVED TO BE THE TOMB OF A MOGUL KING).

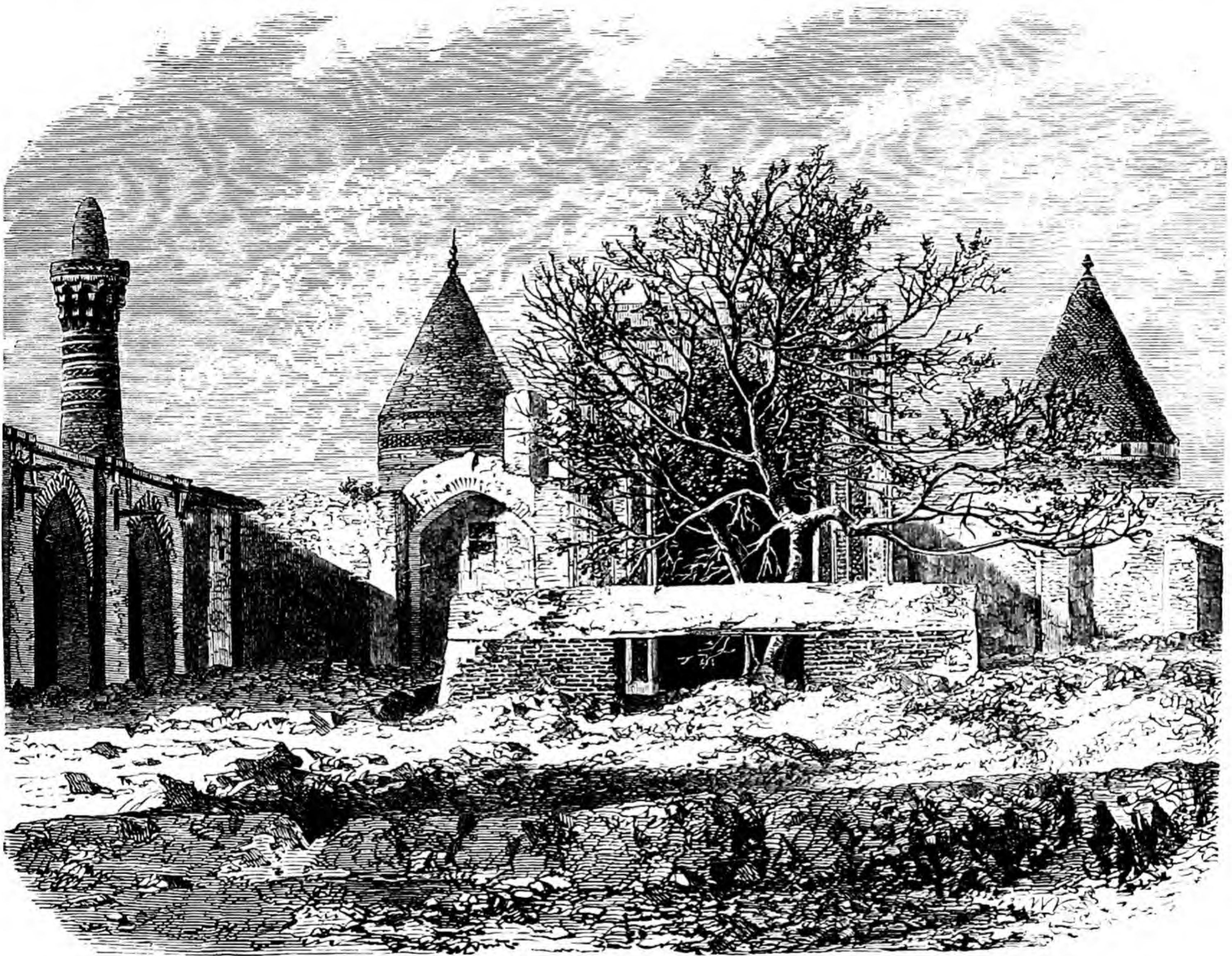
to minister to private vengeance, from which there is no appeal. It would be a misuse of terms to say that the country is well governed: it is not. The Shah is an absolute ruler, and the vast number of his subjects are Mohammedan; but the Armenians, Nestorian Christians, Jews, and Guebres, or followers of the ancient sun-worship of the Persians, now chiefly cherished by the Indian Parsees, may in all amount to 75,000. But the Persians are a patient race, and, knowing nothing better, get along reasonably well between extortions and famines. But the Christians have no rights, and the Jews are treated in the Empire of the Shah infinitely worse than they are in probably



any other country in the world, Morocco not excepted. It is, however, only just to say that, with the exception of China, in no country in Asia is so large a proportion of the people possessed of the elements of education.

#### THE TRADE.

The revenue is estimated at something like 2,300,000, and the expenditure at something less, and the Government has no public debt. But in a country like Persia the



THE TOMB OF BAYAZID-BASTAM AT CHAROUT-BASTAM.

revenue which reaches the treasury bears an insignificant ratio to that which is forced out of the people, but never goes any further than the officials by whom it is personally collected. The external trade of the country is valued at £8,000,000 sterling, but the imports far exceed the exports. The trade with Great Britain is increasing, but it is still insignificant, and as Russia is using every effort to divert much of it in her direction, without corresponding efforts being made on the part of the British merchants, the future does not promise brightly. Persia looks with jealousy on our position in the Gulf, and this



feeling our rivals know well how to take advantage of. In 1886 Persia sent £85,027 worth of goods to Great Britain, and imported £120,368 worth of British produce. But it is almost needless to say only a trifling proportion of the Persian products—chiefly opium—was sent direct to us.

#### PERSIAN TOWNS.

Some of these have already been described, and, with a few alterations to suit local differences, might fairly stand as the type of the others which have not been noticed. Tabriz, Kasvin, Ispahan, and Shiraz have all at different times had the honour of being the Shah's capital; and at present Teheran, on the broad plain near the south-west base of Mount Demavend, is the seat of government, and the principal place of residence of the Court. Teheran, when first heard of in the twelfth century, was a miserable place. The inhabitants lived in houses underground, and indeed it was not until the fifteenth century that they emerged from their subterranean dwellings. But in the sixteenth century Chardin and other European travellers describe it as a large city. At present it does not impress the visitor and at a distance is decidedly disappointing. Its black mud walls are the colour of the ground, so that it looks like a "confused dust-enshrouded mass," and altogether very unlike the Oriental capital of the Eastern tale. Inside, the appearance of things is not much more inviting. The absence of shady trees makes the ill-paved narrow streets very hot, and the want of any approach to a decent hotel does not mollify the traveller disappointed with his first view of the chief city of Persia. Ispahan is not much more inviting, though, as we have seen (p. 307), the climate is more agreeable. Shiraz (p. 313) is the "city of colleges"—of which there are about ten—but the education supplied is of a very elementary character. It is now chiefly visited by those who are curious to examine the magnificent ruins of Persepolis—the ancient capital, and at one time "the glory of the East," and the pride of Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes, until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. Tabriz, with its 165,000 people—as many as Teheran; Meshed, "the Holy," with 60,000; Yezd, with 40,000; and Hamadan, Kermanshah, Kerman, Dizful, Kasvin, Resht, Astrabad, Kashan, Burujird, and Kum—all with between twenty and thirty thousand people—are other towns of importance. It is needless describing them. Filthy thoroughfares, mud walls, sometimes groves of trees, bad water and little of it, bare walls of houses facing the streets; the windows generally without glass, or the balconies looking into the courtyards; and great caravanserais built by speculators or "pious founders" for the accommodation of travellers, are about the most salient features of urban Persia. But over all is written ruin and desolation. New buildings stand tawdry and out of place beside old ones that only echo the past, while the dirt, the disorder, and the discomfort which seem innate to the East prevail everywhere through the land of Iran (pp. 304, 305, 308, 312, 313).

#### PROGRESS OF PERSIA.

The Persian peasantry are, as a rule, contented and even happy. They are oppressed by their local rulers, but ages of tyranny have accustomed them to regard the



tax-gatherer's exaction as a something to which all mankind are subject, and knowing nothing better they are not miserable at the thought of what they must bear. They are even sometimes convinced that after all "Iran" is the favoured of heaven. In illustration of this Sir John Malcolm tells an anecdote of an Arab-Persian woman who had accompanied an English family to Britain, and was being questioned by her relatives in Mekran as to the country and people she had visited. Were they happy? Were they rich? Was the country a good one? The country, the "ayah" replied, was a good one. It was like a garden; the people, she had heard, were happy; she knew they were wise, and they seemed to be rich. At this her friends looked sad. Their country was not like a garden, the inhabitants were not wise, and they felt that they might be richer without being any less happy, and they were turning away, for the first time in their lives, really discontented with their condition, when the woman remarked that in "Feringhistan" there was one thing the people wanted. They had no date trees; she had not seen one in the whole country, and for more than a year she had looked for nothing else. Then the Arabs were happy once more, for they were certain that a country without dates must be miserable indeed.

Again, the Persians, when they leave home, either on business or pleasure—pleasure being the rarest of the motives which induce them to leave their own country—take care, when they return, to run down the good points of the kingdoms they have visited, so as to flatter the national vanity and at the same time preserve their own reputation for truthfulness. They are, moreover, so prejudiced—and this criticism applies to Orientals generally—that they fail to see merit in anything which is different from what they have been accustomed to, and hence generally spend their time abroad in picking out the bad and not the good points of the nations they visit. Finally, the Persians, when they see their country visited by travellers, and foreigners readily residing in it either for purposes of trade or for the sake of official employment, naturally come to the conclusion that if the homes of these people were all they declare them to be, they would scarcely be so anxious to leave them. In Sir John Malcolm's day, few Persians, even of the highest rank, understood any language save their own and Arabic, and though all classes read, the books to which they had access contained little information about any part of the world save Asia. Even then, the knowledge imparted was vague, erroneous, or generally unsatisfactory. Europe they only knew by name, and by confused accounts of its nations and comparative greatness. At a much later date, Jehangir Mirza, a grandson of Fetteh Ali Shah, thought the English, French, and Russian were all under one king, and was astonished to find that Great Britain was governed by a female sovereign. Even yet, it is difficult to make them understand many of the European inventions which have of late years been introduced into their country. In particular the telegraph, of which there are nearly 3,900 miles in operation, is as puzzling to them as it has ever been to the unscientific in Europe. At first they considered that the wires were hollow, and that the messages were blown through them. "Imagine a dog whose tail is here in Teheran, and his muzzle in London; tread on his tail here, and he will bark there." Even after this explanation by the telegraph officer, the local governor, to whom it was vouchsafed, had some difficulty in understanding the *rationale* of the



instrument by which the barking was done. Perhaps, after all, they are not much more obtuse than many people in Europe. A European princess, still living, intelligently inquired, after the famous Ørsted had explained to her the working of the electric telegraph—"how parcels were conveyed along it?" In many an English country town or retired neighbourhood there is as much dull, self-satisfied conceit and stupidity as in any quarter of Persia. The inflated notion of their own importance, which so often possess even otherwise "well educated" people in these islands, is less excusable than in the case of the Persians, for in Britain no one need remain ignorant who can read, while in Persia books are few, and newspapers and other sources of information practically non-existent. But it may be questioned whether in their ignorance there is not a certain degree of bliss? In the East the notions, habits, and prejudices of the people compel reform to come from above—not, as in the case of European nations, to rise to the surface from below. In Europe even the most despotic of Governments recognise the principle in a greater or less degree of power proceeding from the governed, and of the rulers acquiescing thus far in the wishes of the ruled. Such an idea is strange to the East; the occupants of the throne and places of trust would consider such an assertion in the light of a wild paradox; even their subjects would be puzzled to account for such a theory having in it any element of good. It would only tempt certain headstrong people to rise in rebellion, and rebellion has a happy ending when it does not lead further than the bastinado, or the gallows. Yet Persia, though fallen from the condition it once enjoyed, is really progressing—it may be slowly, awkwardly, and in a fashion which often savours of the passive. The force of European stimulus is pushing it forward; there is no active resistance if the way be sufficiently smoothed by "backsheesh," but there is no actual aid to it, and most frequently, if the motive power is removed, the machine rolls back to the rut out of which it had been started. The future of Persia it is not easy to forecast. Should she ever attain anything of her former greatness, her power for evil or good will count for much in Central Asia. On the contrary, should she gradually sink into insignificance, the prospect which lies before us is not one pleasant to contemplate. The prey on this side of the ambition of one power, on that of the fears and necessities of another, Iran will be torn by the spoiler, or be the scene of war between nations whose interest it is to remain at peace.

We now leave Mohammedan Persia with its Shiite fanatics, for Mohammedan Turkey with its Sunnee sectarians. The one country is solely confined to Asia, the other has spread itself over important parts of Europe and Asia, and has caused its flag to be recognised in Northern Africa also. With its consideration we can therefore suitably begin the brief sketch of Africa and Europe with which we shall conclude our survey of the world.



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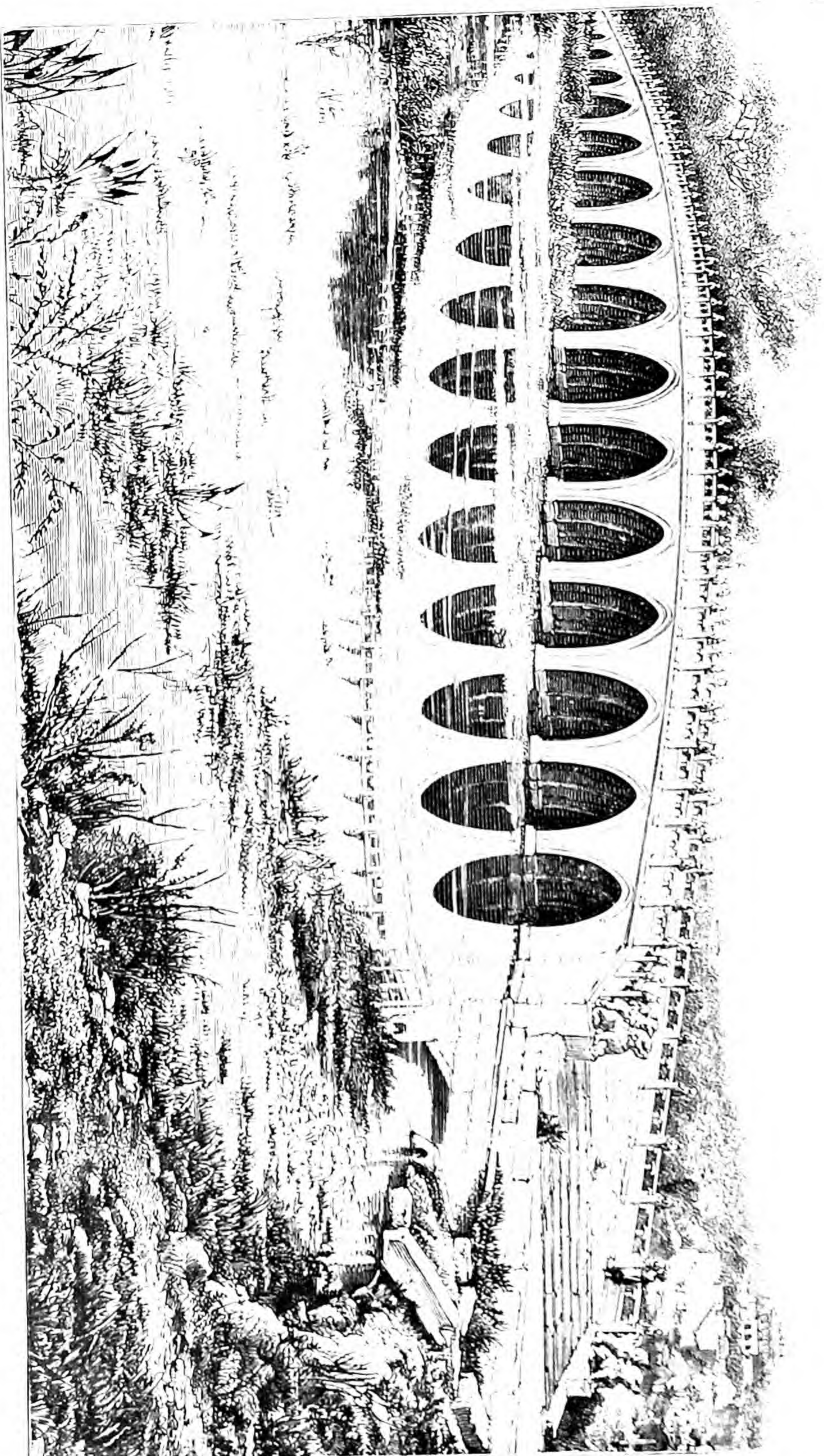
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